DETERMINANTS OF ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS OF THE TRIBALS

(A CASE OF THE HMAR TRIBE OF SOUTH ASSAM)

By

Dr. Lalzawmlien

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Dr. Lalzawmlien

(This work was submitted by Dr. Lalzawmlien as a Ph.D. Thesis for the partial fulfillment of Ph.D. degree in Department of Economics, M.G. School of Economics and Commerce, Assam University, Silchar. Dist-Cachar, State-Assam, INDIA in the year 2011)

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Preface

The problem of economic backwardness and poverty among the tribal’s of the country in general and those of backward region like South-Assam in particular is outstanding. The economic development of the region also depends on the development of these people. Hence it was felt necessary to make a concentrated study on the determinants of economic backwardness of the tribal’s with special reference to the Hmar tribe of South-Assam.

The study mainly aims at investigating the existing economic conditions of the Hmar Tribe in respect of their economic activities, indebtedness, income and occupational pattern so as to identify the factors behind their economic backwardness and to recommend ways and means of their economic uplift. For that, an attempt has been made to put together as much evidence available including census, Commission Reports, Surveys and several other studies. But unfortunately, the census department did not have any community wise data for the Scheduled Tribe (Hills) including the Hmar in South-Assam. So, the study is based entirely on primary data collected from the cross section of the Hmar tribe.

The study is the outcome of PhD research work and a Minor Research Project granted by UGC, NERO. Guwahati, Assam. I express my deep debt of gratitude to the Secretary and other official staff of UGC, NERO, Guwahati, Assam for financing this project.

This work has been prepared under the expert guidance of Professor (Dr) Mahmood Alam Ansari, Department of Economic, Assam University, Silchar. My words are inadequate to express my sense of gratitude and indebtedness to him.

My sincere thanks are due to the authorities and staff of Assam University Library Silchar, Guwahati University Library, Janata College Kabuganj Library, Omio Kumar Institute Library Guwahati, Library of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, Directorate of Census Opperations, Guwahati, Deputy Directors of Economic and Statistics, Silchar, Government Press, Guwahati, JNU Library, Delhi for granting me facilities for my reference works.
I also convey my thanks to all the Headman and villagers of Hmar villages of Cachar district for their kind co-operation during my field work.

My special thanks are due to my friend Raltawnluoi Intovate, Junior Engineer PWD, Silchar, S.K. Khobung, Zonal Officer, Assam State Housing Board, Silchar and my wife Dr. Lalpeklawm Hmar and my father Late Rokhum, who left this miserable world on 8th August 2013 due to cancer for all their help and co-operation to enable me to complete this work.

Finally, I place on record my thanks to Dr. Suprabir Dutta Roy Principal, Janata College, Kabuganj who has given me necessary leave of absence and encouragement for undertaking and completion of this work.

DR. LALZAWMLIEN
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Chapter – 1

Introduction
The thesis deals with the problems of tribal economic backwardness. Empirical study is however focused on a single tribe called Hmar - a tribe whose population is less than a hundred thousand in the whole country and whose residence is mainly concentrated in the northeastern provinces of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram. In comparison to other tribes in the northeastern part of the country, the tribe under consideration is relatively much more backward and lagging. Being very small with regard to population and area of residence, Hmar has been unfortunately quite neglected section of the society in the Barak valley, situated in the southern part of Assam. In Cachar district, which is our field area, there are in total 36684 Hmar persons residing in 5216 houses of 99 villages. We attempt to explore the status of shifting cultivation, household income, savings and indebtedness among the Hmar agriculturist, on the basis of analysis of primary data collected from 250 sample households (selecting them from 17 villages) spread over the geographical area of around one hundred and fifty kilometers in the district of Cachar, Assam. The survey was done in 2007-08. In the present work, the traditional method of agricultural production, low level of income and low savings, and lack of entrepreneurship are considered among the principal determinants of economic underdevelopment of the Hmar. Conceptually, there are a multiple of economic and non-economic factors responsible for backwardness. An attempt is thus also made to identify the non-economic problems faced by the community. Recommendation of the ways and means of social and economic improvement of this community of tribe is tagged at the end of the thesis.

Given the facts that northeastern region of the country is considered not only a mosaic of divergent tribes but also a diaspora, it is unfortunate and problematic that there are divergent rate of demographic variations witnessed among them and also different levels of economic development attained by them individually across sub-regions in the state of Assam. In a state like Assam, which is characterized by divergent agro-climatic features, uneven topography and low rate of off-farm industrial growth, the problems of different segment of tribal population and different areas are also not similar. In the literature which mainly deals with aggregative studies of tribal societies, the specific economic conditions of numerous small tribes are not properly and adequately reflected. In view of these inadequacies, micro-study of occupation, income and savings of specific tribe, for example Hmar,
is highly warranted and important to articulate the levels of economic backwardness in a more realistic manner. It is also useful in formulating specific strategies of development.

There is a second level of problem which relates with the fact that there is abundance of sociological and anthropological studies of the tribal in the northeastern region, including Assam. Profound and in-depth economic studies and analysis of economic aspects of tribal life has suffered in between. In case of Hmar, this is so much true. It is quite difficult to find economic studies of the life and society of Hmar in south Assam. Economic analysis of Hmar tribal life received very little attention from the academicians in the past. Only a few scholars have attempted to study the tribal economic problems. Prominent among such economic researches are ‘tribal in transition - a socio-economic history of study’ by P. J. Goswami, and ‘a socio-economic history of south Assam’ by Subhas Chatterjee. The present study which is a micro-study of a single tribe over a small geographical area, attempts to fill the gaps by focusing on search for the determinants of backwardness of the Hmar tribe and distress conditions of the Hmar households in southern part of Assam (in and around the Cachar district).

We investigate both economic and non-economic factors of underdevelopment of the Hmar tribe because economic backwardness is not an isolated phenomenon. It is an important segment of an overall scenario of general backwardness of vast majority of the people of the state of Assam. What gives distinct character to the problems of Hmar communities are its special linkages with natural environment and tribe-specific institutional practices which sustain them at a psychological level of ‘primitive affluence’. Most of the Hmar families live in the plains of south Assam and the two autonomous hill districts of Assam. Living in naturally isolated regions and being known by different names, their popular identities are based on some symbol of original inhabitations or distinction based on plain and hills. Among all the different names, the name ‘Adivasi’ is most extensively known and ‘Anusuchit Janjati’ (schedule tribe) is the constitutional identity of the Hmar in south Assam.

In Assam, the tribal populations constitute a sizable proportion of the total population of the state. Their residences and farm area they operate occupy a
significant proportion of the land area of the state. In view of these facts, it is a safe conjecture that overall development of the state is very much linked with the development of tribes. This has been reflected in the planning process. The development of the tribal region and preparing grounds for the entry of the tribal communities into the socio-economic mainstream has been the most challenging tasks of economic planning in the state. In the course of five decades of economic planning in the state, various organized attempts have been made to bring the tribal communities and tribal regions into the mainstream of economic development. A number of modernization programmes have been initiated for tribal development. Result of various studies show that the process has not only resulted in development, modernization and progress but also in incalculable harm to the tribe instead of bringing them on par with the rest of the society.

With modernization, the tribal have lost their traditional rights over the forest and have become aliens on their own soil. The intrusion of outsiders into the tribal areas has brought an alien value-system and culture, which has shaken the very basis of tribal society by putting them into a major socio-economic dilemma. The introduction of money in tribal economy has exposed them to the glitters of the industrial society without elevating their productive horizons. The failure of the simple minded tribal to acquaint themselves with the basic tenets of money economy has confronted them with a situation of unfavorable terms of trade with the rest of the national economy. In Assam, the process of modernization and industrialization has destroyed their primitive way of living, but failed to bring modern economic system of production among tribes. The tribes are still practicing shifting cultivation in agriculture and engaged in low-paid occupations in industry and service. This is so much true about the small tribe of Hmar.

There is high mortality rate among tribes in Assam. This reduces the pressure of population on land and helps them to ensure self-sufficiency under the framework of primitive equilibrium in complete harmony with the natural environment. The philosophy of life of the Hmar tribe is influenced by the myths of primitive affluence, which is in turn helpful in making it rise above economic consideration. Their activities are more guided by old-age conventions and traditions rather than by statutory laws of an alien value system imposed by the government, far away in
Guwahati and Delhi. All these values and norms have also contributed in keeping the Hmar tribal community alienated from the national mainstream and have kept them in an environment not exposed to socio-economic changes. We further explore the theme through the findings of interviews and group discussions conducted during the field survey in villages of the district of Cachar in the year of 2007-08 in our study.

1.1. Hmar - A Neglected Backward Tribe

The Hmar of south Assam are one of the earlier settlers among the tribal in this valley. They are in all the three districts of south Assam, but mostly concentrated in Cachar district. Though, the Hmar are one of the largest tribal community living in south Assam, the name ‘Hmar’ was unknown to most of the Indian even after 60 years of independence. When the Indian first Prime minister Late, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru first met by Mr. Rochunga Pudaite (A Hmar Educationist) in October, 1953, Nehru asked in astonishment that “I have not heard anything about this tribe” (Pudaite, 1963, preface). There was much confusion among the other communities about the Hmar tribe of south Assam till today. The British called them as ‘Old Kuki’ and the Bengalis of south Assam sometime called them as ‘Kuki’ or even Naga (Dutta, 2006, p.496). The term Kuki was first used by the Bengalis and later on by the British colonial to identify the hills tribes other than the Nagas. In the writings of J. Shakespeare in his Lushai-Kuki Clans, he included Hmar in the Old Kuki clans and also used the term Khawthlang (people who lived in the west) and Khawchhak (people who lived in the east) interchangeably to mean Hmars (Grierson, 1904). J.W. Edgar, who accompanied the British column to Tipaimukh on April 3, 1972 also reported that “the name Kuki has been given to the tribe by the Bengalis and is not recognized by the hill men themselves and I have never found any trace of a common name for the tribe among them, although they too consider different families belonging to a single group, which is certainly coexistent with that we call Kuki tribe” (Mackenzie, 1979).

In south Assam, there are about 23 tribal groups. Among them, Hmar are one of the most neglected tribe economically, politically or socially. They are being dominated
by the Bengalis and some other general populations. Though, Hmar are included in the schedule tribe list of India since 1956, they do not enjoy any economics benefits from the government as other tribes enjoyed in this valley. It is very much against the Late Prime minister Nehru tribal policy which state that “our policy that tribal should have as much freedom and autonomy as possible so that they can live their own lives according to their own desires” (Vashum, 2005, p.69).

In case of other north eastern tribal communities, the government is serious in making development. Nagaland has been created a fully fledged state for the development of Naga tribes in 1963. Now the Nagas are enjoying huge amount of development funds every year from central as well as state government. Again in 1987, Mizoram was formed a statehood for the development of Mizo tribes by the central government. Now they depend on central funds for their development. Meghalaya was also created a full flagged state in 1972 for the aspiration of the hills people of the Khasi tribe, Jaintia and Garo tribe. In Assam, the two autonomous hill districts were formed by the government mainly for Dimasa tribe and Karbi tribe in the long back. Now they are economically much better than that of the Hmar tribe of south Assam. Again in 2003, the government has created a new Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Assam for Bodo tribe. They are now politically and economically better than that of the Hmar in south Assam. Most of the major tribes in northeast India have their own states, districts and enjoyed all the funds flow from central government as well as state government. But the government has neglected upon the Hmar tribe. Till today, the Hmar do not have any state or districts in India though they are one of the first settlers among the tribals in this valley.

The schedule castes and schedule tribe list modification order 1956, issued by Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India Vide Notification No. S. R. O.2477A dated 29th October 1956 regarded the Hmar as a separate tribe, but the government of Assam divided the tribals into schedule tribe (hills) and schedule tribe (plains). The schedule tribes (hills) includes tribal communities like the Hmar, Chakma, Dimasa Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng, Bhoi, Lyangngam, Pnar War, any Kuki tribes (with 37 sub-tribes), Lakher, Man (Tai-Speaking), any Mizo (Lushai tribe), Mikir, any Naga tribes, Pawi, and Syangtheng, and they are schedule tribes in the autonomous districts only. Again schedule tribe (plains)
include communities like- Barman in Cachar, Boro, Boro Kachari, Deori, Hojai, Kachari Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri and Rabha. They are all schedule tribes in Assam excluding autonomous districts (data on schedule caste and schedule tribe, Census of India, 2001). Further, as per the policy of the Government of Assam, if the schedule tribes of the autonomous hill districts reside permanently in the plain districts they cannot be treated as schedule tribes in the Plains. They are called ‘hill tribes in the plains’. Similarly, schedule tribes of plains districts, residing permanently in the hill districts are called ‘Plains Tribes in the Hills’. However, excluding electoral reservation they would be eligible for all economic, educational and employment benefits.

Tribal communities like the Barman, the Hmar, the Riang, the Halam, the Tipra, the Kuki, the Naga, the Garo, the Khasi, and the Mikir have been residing in this valley. But all these tribes are not getting similar treatment as regards economic, political, and other matters like their brothers in the hills (Goswami, 1995, p.26). So, all the hill tribes including the Hmar of south Assam avail schedule tribe reservation in case of education and employment but in case of electoral, they are treated as same with general populations. Though, they have economic reservations. But in the absence of electoral reservations it is not possible for them to avail any economic benefits implemented specially for schedule tribe. All economic benefits implemented for schedule tribe by the government in south Assam are availed by the schedule tribe (plains) communities. For example, the government has distributed weaving machines, tractors, piggery loans etc. for the tribals in south Assam with a compensation rate for tribal development through tribal sub-plan, Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP). But all these facilities are availed by the plain tribal communities like the Barman, Boda residing in this valley.

To solve all these problems, in 1991 the Cachar Hill People’s Federation (CHPF) was formed in Chikhur (Hmar village) of Cachar district under the leadership of T. Sangkhum Hmar to demand Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council in south Assam and the Government of Assam fulfilled its demand in her notification order no. TAD/ BC/30/96/34 dated 18th March 1996 and established the Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council (Pajamte, 2006, p.217). Their office is presently located at Silchar town of Cachar district. But the Barak Valley Hill Tribes
Development Council cannot solve all these economic and political problems of the Hmar and other hill tribes in south Assam. Even after establishment of Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council Office, the hill tribes of south Assam cannot enjoy development funds that come from Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) because they do not have electoral reservation in the plain districts. All the fund comes from Tribal Sub-Plan in this valley are enjoyed by the plain tribal communities. So, lack of electoral reservation for the hill tribes including the Hmar of south Assam is one of the determinants of their economic backwardness. The plain tribal communities of south Assam like the Barman, Rabha etc. have electoral reservation and they enjoy funds from Tribal Sub-Plan and their economy is more or less better than that of the hill tribes of south Assam like the Hmar and Naga of this valley.

The entire economy of the Hmar people can be classified as agriculturists or cultivators (Pudaite, 1963). There are blacksmiths and professional priests who live on contribution of rice and meat given to them in exchange for service rendered to their community. There a few shopkeepers but their business are small and the number of people involved in this type of enterprise are negligible. In fact, most of the shopkeepers are cultivators running stores at their leisure. The agricultural method of the Hmar is very primitive. The implements they used were mainly dau and small hoe. The sowing of seed is done by the whole village usually joint in a corporate labor. Their main agricultural crop is rice. They grow all kinds of vegetables and fruits including cucumber, watermelon, melon, beans, yams, potatoes, red chili and corn.

There are also some Hmars who combined jhum cultivation with pottery making, weaving, hunting and fishing. But hunting and fishing is for their own consumption purpose as well as for selling. In the works of Pakhungte (1983), when the populations of the Hmar was small, there was enough supply of land for jhum cultivation and the land was left fallow from ten to fifteen years, which is said to be an ideal period for land recuperation. But now, increase in the demand for land in relation to supply, the Hmar people of south Assam cultivates again before it fully recuperates. The frequent cutting of bamboo and trees results in large growth of tall grasses, the goods forest land become brazen and dry lands. This has adverse effects on the Hmar economy. After conversion into Christianity, little changes are taking
place in the Hmar economy. Some of the Hmars have now permanent wet rice fields, but majority of them still cling the jhum cultivation (refer to Appendix – I). Because of the continuous jhuming and burning of vegetation, hill slopes have been eroded and top soil washed away, leading to environmental degradation and silting of the river (Sinha, 1994).

Before the introduction of money in an economy, production and appropriation involved little profit motive. The traditional Hmar society was marked by give and take and the wealth, given and taken was one of the main instruments of social organization. The introduction of money as a medium of exchange had a tremendous impact on the subsistence economy of the Hmars. To get cash money, they grow cash crops such as chilly, cotton, orange, etc. and sell these to merchants in Cachar and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Thus, with the introduction of money trade greatly increased, the degree and differentiation by wealth was also tremendously increased. Indebtedness which was unknown in the traditional Hmar economy become rampant and this made the helpless debtors easy victims of exploitation at the hands of private money-lenders and the traditional Hmar economy was gradually integrated with the capitalist economy with all its antecedent evils (Laldena, 2008).

In short, we may say that the Hmar are politically, socially or economically more backward than the other communities and this is complemented by the fact that they do not have any state or districts for their development. Moreover, they cannot enjoy all the tribal development funds which are enjoyed presently by the other tribes of Assam. Due to neglected by the policy makers, they depend on traditional occupation and lives in a marginal economy.

1.2. Economic Status of Assamese Tribes

Fried (1975) proposed that most contemporary tribes do not have their origin in pre-state tribes, but rather in pre-state bands. Such "secondary" tribes, he suggested, actually came about as modern products of state expansion. Bands comprise small, mobile, and fluid social formations with weak leadership. They do not generate
surpluses, pay no taxes and support no standing army. Fried argued that secondary tribes develop in one of two ways. First, states could set them up as means to extend administrative and economic influence in their hinterland, where direct political control costs too much. States would encourage (or require) people on their frontiers to form more clearly bounded and centralized polities, because such polities could begin producing surpluses and taxes, and would have a leadership responsive to the needs of neighboring states (the so-called "schedule" tribes of the United States or of British India provide good examples of this).

Second, bands could form "secondary" tribes as a means to defend themselves against state expansion. Members of bands would form more clearly bounded and centralized polities, because such polities could begin producing surpluses that could support a standing army that could fight against states, and they would have a leadership that could co-ordinate economic production and military activities. In case of the north eastern India, the first thesis seems to be true. The British Empire followed the first way, and it seems to be continuing till date. In some countries, such as the United States of America and India, tribes are polities that have been granted legal recognition and limited autonomy by the state. So the government of India is not as much interested in centralization. The decentralization in the form of Autonomous Hill Councils started recently.

The valley, south Assam is also not free from all these defects. The mainstay of the economy is agriculture and the agriculture productivity entirely depends on fair weather. One of the reasons for underdevelopment of agricultural sector is due to occurrence of frequent floods. Agriculturists rely and wait for Monsoon floods to sow and transplant crops because irrigation facilities are also poor.

All works for the improvement of land is maintained by poor farmers and the role of government in this matter is very scanty. South Assam consists of nearly thirty lacks of populations comprising four major linguistic and religious groups, namely, Bengali Hindu, Bengali Muslim, Manipuri, Tea garden and ex-tea garden workers. Besides these, a numbers of tribal groups are also residing in this valley. The following table 1.1 shows the population wise distribution of workers in Assam and south Assam.
Table: 1.1.

Population-wise Distribution of Cultivators and Workers in Assam and South Assam: 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Assam</th>
<th>South Assam</th>
<th>Percentage to the State Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>26,655,528</td>
<td>2,995,769</td>
<td>11.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rural population</td>
<td>23,216,288</td>
<td>26,76,447</td>
<td>11.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>cultivators</td>
<td>373,0773</td>
<td>2,46,012</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Agricultural labors</td>
<td>1,263,532</td>
<td>13,4001</td>
<td>10.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Compiled from Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 2005 and Census of India, 2001 Series-I.

Table: 1.2.

Percentage of Land Utilization in Assam and South Assam: 1999-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Land Variables</th>
<th>Percentage of reporting Area (hectare)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>32.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Not available for cultivation</td>
<td>32.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Non-agricultural uses</td>
<td>13.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Barren and uncultivable</td>
<td>18.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fallow land</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>34.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


South Assam is the home of 11.24 percent of the total populations of the state. The rural population of this valley consists of about 11.52 percent of the state rural populations. It is surprising to see that south Assam is the home of only 7.00 percent of the total cultivators of Assam. A good number of rural populations are agriculturist, consisting of cultivators and laborers, non agricultural laborers are higher figure.
In south Assam, the pattern of land use is determined by both economic and physical institutional framework. The above table 1.2 reveals that, the land of south Assam is more suitable for agriculture than the state. In south Assam, the non available for cultivation land is only 19.45 percent hectare and the state as a whole is more than 32.24 percent. The percentage of fallow land is almost same, but the problem is that net sown area is only 33.85 percent which is below the percentage of the state as a whole. The gross cropped sown area (GCA) of Assam had increased from 44.1 percent to 50.88 percent in 1997-98 and it further increased to 52.07 percent in 1999-2000. In case of south Assam, the percentage increased in gross cropped sown area is 43.74 in 1999-2000. In comparison to the state as a whole, the land brought under cropping has not witnessed a sufficient growth. This is because south Assam is principally monocropping region. There is almost very small amount of agricultural land which is cropped thrice or twice in the year. There is a need to produce multiple cropping in south Assam.

There are no census reports about the population of Schedule Tribe (Hills) in the plain districts of Assam including the three districts of south Assam. It is but a common knowledge that a number of Hills tribes communities are residing in south Assam since long.

Table: 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>South Assam</th>
<th>Assam</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G.C.A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(hectare)</td>
<td>Percentage to the reporting area</td>
<td>G.C.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>2,68,943</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>34,60,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>2,99,191</td>
<td>43.29</td>
<td>39,26,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>3,02,272</td>
<td>43.74</td>
<td>40,87,341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Promila Rani Brahma, Minister of Welfare of Plain Tribes (WPT) and Backward Classes (BC) Assam, there are 555 tribal villages in south Assam (Barak Valley). Cachar district of Assam has 319 tribal villages, whereby Karimganj has 139 villages and Hailakandi has 97 villages respectively. There exists a population list of schedule tribe (hills) communities in Barak valley. We deserves populations of Hmar as 96,576, such that Chiru at 2,488, the Naga tribe at 27,094, Khasis at 60,779, Riang at 28,204, Mizo at 9,202, Kuki at 13,153, Chakma stand at 5,386, Mogh at 711, Karbi at 3,821, Vaiphei at 8,279, Paite at 2,833, Simic at 757 and Gangte at only 750. The total populations stand at 2,60,033 (The Sentinel, 28th March 2008, p.3). The schedule tribes (plains) communities’ populations in south Assam are divided and the Barmans at 13,479 Boro - Boro Kachari at 380, but Miri at only 17. Whereas, the populations of Sonowal Kachari are at 7,548, Rabha at 46 and the population of Lalung is at 22. It is however surprising to find of Deori being only 19 (Census of India 2001).

There are twenty three tribes excluding unclassified tribes. The total schedule tribe populations were 2,874,441 in 1991. It has further increased to 33,08,570 in 2001, which indicated that the schedule tribe population in Assam was increased by 434,129 in a period ten years. In 2001 census there are 26,655,528 general populations in Assam as indicated in table: 1.1. It means that the percentage of schedule tribe population to the general population in 2001 census constitutes 12.41 percent.

In 1991, Boro tribe has the highest percentage (44.1 percent) of population among the schedule tribe in Assam and they remain the highest even in 2001 census and their population was increased by 434,129 in a gap of ten years. It is surprised to see that all the number of populations of tribes had gradually increased in a gap of ten years, but in the case of tribes like Chakma, Hajong, Lakher, Man (Tai speaking), Hojai and Kachari Sonowal has been decreased and the tribe Pawi, which was found in 1991 was no more in 2001 census of Assam. Further, the table: 1.4 also shows that the Hmar population was 11,189 in 1991 constituting 0.4 percent of the total schedule tribe populations in Assam. Their percentage to the total schedule tribe population was remained unchanged even in 2001 and the number of population was increased only to 3,271 within a period of ten years.
Table: 1.4
Distribution of Populations of Tribes in Assam: 1991 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chakma</td>
<td>4,187</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2,478</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)1,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dimasa</td>
<td>65,009</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>45,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Garo</td>
<td>17,985</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>21,112</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hajong</td>
<td>1,638</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)1,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hmar</td>
<td>11,189</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>14,460</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Khasi</td>
<td>11,358</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>12,722</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Any Kuki Tribes</td>
<td>21,883</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>28,273</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>6,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Lakher</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Man (Tai speaking)</td>
<td>2,582</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)1,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2,957</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Mikir</td>
<td>285,811</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>353,513</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>67,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Any Naga Tribes</td>
<td>15,354</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>21,706</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>6,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Pawi</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Syntheng</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Barmans</td>
<td>13,375</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>15,877</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Boro etc.</td>
<td>1,263,015</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>135,277</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>89,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Deori</td>
<td>35,849</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>41,161</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Hojai</td>
<td>4,582</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,882</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>(-)2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Kachari Sonowal</td>
<td>251,725</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>235,881</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>(-)15,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Lalung</td>
<td>143,746</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>170,622</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>26,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Mech</td>
<td>6,738</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>8,997</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Miri</td>
<td>467,790</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>587,310</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>119,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Rabha</td>
<td>236,931</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>277,517</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>40,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Unclassified/ Generic Tribes.</td>
<td>7,466</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>47,013</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>39,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>All tribe</td>
<td>2,874,441</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,308,570</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>434,129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Compiled from Data on Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe, Census of India, 1991 and 2001 (Office of the Registrar General, Government of India).

It is important to note that, the population of Hmar tribe should have been increased furthermore, but the census department has counted only from the two hills districts of Assam, namely North Cachar Hill district and Karbi Anglong districts. Numbers of Hmar are also inhabitants in south Assam, but their population is not added into the data on schedule caste and schedule tribe in both 1991 and 2001 census. They are legally not recognized as schedule tribe in the plain districts of Assam including
south Assam. It is also true for all the schedule tribe (hills) living in the plain districts of Assam. The population of the Hmar is not very large like the other tribes. But they are scattered in different parts of northeast India and occupy an important place among the hill tribes of northeast India. The population of Hmar was 60,142 in India during 1991 census. In 2001 census there are 42,960 Hmar in Manipur, 18,155 in Mizoram, 1,146 in Meghalaya and 14,460 in the two autonomous districts of Assam (Census of India 2001) and therefore, in total 76,721 Hmar populations in India. Though there is no record of Hmar population in south Assam. The reason is this that large numbers of tribal are still not recognized officially by the state.

The populations of the Hmar in various states vary from state to state. Manipur has the highest Hmar population, followed by Mizoram as per 1991 and 2001 census, and Meghalaya has the smallest Hmar population in India. In Assam, there are also numbers of Hmar populations, but the number of Hmar population are counted in the census (Data on Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe) records, only from the two hill districts. Though, we have no census record of Hmar population in south Assam, but the Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council, Silchar, has recorded Hmar population at 50561 persons in the year 2001. In Cachar, they have recorded 36,684 Hmar populations and 5,216 houses and 99 villages. In Karimganj district, they have recorded as 13,877 Hmar populations with 2056 houses and 37 villages. No record was found in case of Hailakandi district.

Table: 1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>35,767</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>42,960</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>12,535</td>
<td>20.08</td>
<td>18,155</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assam (Two Hill Districts)</td>
<td>11,189</td>
<td>39.38</td>
<td>14,460</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All India</td>
<td>60,142</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>76,721</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Indian constitutions do not define the concept of ‘tribe’. According to article 342, the President may specify twenty three schedules tribes in Assam, 14 tribes in the two autonomous Hills District namely, North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong and 9 tribes in the plain districts of Assam (Goswami, 1995). schedule tribe communities in the autonomous district are: Chakma, Dimasa Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng, Bhoi, Lyngngam, Pnar, War, any Kuki tribes (including 37 sub tribes), Lakher, Man (Tai-Speaking), any Mizo (Lushai Tribes), Mikir, any Naga Tribes, Pawi, and Syntheng. The schedule tribes communities excluding the autonomous districts of Assam are: Barmans in Cachar, Boro, Boro Kachari, Deori, Hojai, Kachari Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri, Rabha (Census of India, 2001). Since the Hmar is not officially recognized in the plain districts of Assam and it is not included in the list of the constitution, systematic studies do not exist. We have virtually no secondary sources of reliable data on Hmar. In the present thesis, we study the tribal households. The tribal household constitutes members of the family. They are directly engaged in economic process, all the members of the households the father, mother and their children’s together forms a unit of production. But the son or daughter who already get married and stay in a separate house are not counted as a unit of production.

1.3. Selection of South Assam and Hmar Tribe

South Assam, which comprises of three plain districts namely Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi, is situated in the southern part of Assam with an area of 6,941 square kilometers. A river called ‘Barak’ is flowing throughout the district of Cachar. South Assam is also known as the Barak Valley. In this valley of three districts having populations of 29, 95,769 persons in total (Census of India, 2001), large numbers of schedule tribe communities are residing with the plain community. These tribes in the population’s strata occupy the lowest economic strata. Most of the tribes in this valley are residing in the isolated hill slopes and backward interior
areas. Being far-off spatially and of low strata socially, the tribes are yet entangled in traditional way of living.

In south Assam, there are two types of schedule tribes, namely schedule tribe (Hills) and schedule tribe (Plains). It is our contention that the schedule tribe of the Autonomous Hill Districts resides permanently in the plain districts they must not be treated as schedule tribes in the plains. They must be called ‘Hills Tribes in the Plain’ that is Schedule tribe (Hills). Similarly schedule tribes for plains districts, residing permanently in the hill districts, they called as ‘plains tribes in the hills’ that is schedule tribe (Plains). We have selected south Assam as geographical area of study and so Hmar tribe scattered in plains as well as hills are our sample of study.

There are four reasons behind choosing Hmar for the present study. First, it is the least-studied tribe. The government agencies have not studied the tribe in much detail. It is the tribe, which is a victim of discriminations by the other tribe. Second, it is selected because it is backward, suffers from credit unavailability and has very low level of skill level and entrepreneurial ability. Third, it is the tribe that the researcher himself belongs. Fourth, in this study, the Hmar tribe has been selected because they are one of the largest tribes in south Assam. Hmar is the largest tribe living in the forest and in the hills. They have their own distinct identities. So the study of a single tribe is expected to be helpful in revealing the economic problems for all the other tribal in this valley. Further, the study will also be helpful in illuminating an explored area of development in the state and may throw some light in formulating an appropriate strategy for bringing the tribal communities to the main stream of economic life of the state.

1.4. Objectives and Hypotheses

In our thesis, an attempt has been made to get an insight into the determinants of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe of south Assam. We have set the following three broad objectives of the research work:
1. The first objective of the study is to investigate the nature and extent of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe.

2. The second objective of the study is to identify the factors behind their economic backwardness.

3. The third and last objective of the study is to recommend ways and means for their economic upliftment.

To carry out the first objective, information has been collected regarding the economic factors which have a bearing on backwardness of the tribal such as anomalies and distortions in the occupational behavior, income level, savings, credit structure, numbers of earning members of the household and pattern of land holdings. Information has also been gathered on the size of household and literacy rate. To fulfill the second objective, all the data and information have been tabulated on the basis of average, percentage etc. A comparison has been made to find out the relative weight of factors. Further, the primary data collected are also interpreted through statistical regression analysis to identify the main factors behind the Hmar economic backwardness. To fulfill the last objective, we have drawn implications from the tabulated results as well as statistical regression results.

Principal Literature

There are number of studies done by anthropologists and other social scientists and scholars on tribal economy related to their development, land alienations, forest etc. Some of the studies are reviews on the related topic under study to understand the nature of tribal economic backwardness in different situation. The tribal are more backward compared not only to the general population, but also the schedule castes and other backward social groups under constitutional protection. The author examined the efforts of planned developmental intervention on the tribal from 1961 to 1981 and concluded that twenty years of intervention has not only made any significant impact on the conditions of the tribal (D’Souza, 1990). A mere plan of economic development would be utterly inadequate. Along with economic planning, there should be social and political planning in an integrated manner (Roy Burman, 1989). According to Puri (1972), there is no use in expending valuable time, energy
and resources on solving the northeast problem, as the government seems to be doing generally in the region. He further says that problems will have to be dealt with from root up, and it will involve urgent and effective measures to end the isolation of the tribes of their distinct from the rest of the country.

Bhapuji (1992) points out that tribal development strategy in the successive plans could not reduce the complexity of the tribal situation as planners and policy makers have not been able to rectify the reasons for its failure in the successive plans. He further points out that one must recognize that the destiny of development strategies depends upon those for whom they are intended and the main impetus for growth must come from within the community. He suggests that such a tribal participation can be promoted by replacing the existing ‘top-down’ with ‘bottom-up’ approach which necessarily means a reduced change in the outlook of policy makers and administrators. Goswami (1984) describes the strategies for tribal development with special reference to the tribes of north-eastern region of India. The strategy for tribal development, the author argues, requires defining in clear terms the contexts of development for tribal which are bound to be different from the national contexts. Tribal living in the hills with some minor exception is not yet integrated into national economy and their contact with the economy has been minimal. Basu (1985) in his study on tribal development programmes in Himachal Pradesh, especially in Bharmour and Pangi sub-divisions of Chamba district, has analyzed the various aspects of development programmes in the tribal belt. He points out that the efforts made by the government were inadequate to solve basic problems of poverty, malnutrition and exploitation of tribal. Lakshmaiah (1990) in his study of socio-economic development of tribal in Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh found out that in spite of the rigorous efforts through planned development in the district, major problems relating to tribal remain unresolved. Improved communication system in the district has helped mostly non-tribal to enter into interior areas and exploit the tribal.

Most of the studies reveal tribal economic backwardness in terms of development administration, land alienation etc. but the important tribe of south Assam namely the Hmar has not attracted to any researcher so far. So the present study is an attempt to focus on certain main economic issues relation to economic backwardness of the
Hmar tribe in South-Assam in terms of occupational practice, income level, saving pattern, credit structure etc. to fill the gap of earlier studies. No studies reviewed so far has undertaken the study of entrepreneurship among tribal, which is gap we try to fill in our study.

Hypotheses

We have three main hypotheses:

1. The Hmar tribes of south Assam are not familiar with modern techniques of agricultural production.
2. Their access to credit and credit facilities are very scarce.
3. Their households are characterized by lack of entrepreneurial ability in their members.

These three hypotheses are chosen because our literature survey (detailed survey is furnished in second chapter) have given us many unanswerable questions related with nature of methods and techniques of agricultural production, the level of income, consumption and the residual called savings and also about the nature of entrepreneurship. The finding of answers to these questions would help us in proving/disapproving the hypotheses.

1.5. Scope, Significance and Limitations

Our study deals with only Hmar tribe. It is confined to geographical area of south Assam. There are other tribes like the Barmans, the Khasi, the Karbi, the Riang and the Tripuri etc who are also residing in this valley of south Assam. But the study does not aim to cover such tribes. Only occasional reference to such other tribes is made. Further, the study does not cover comprehensively the socio-cultural, religious, and other dimensions of the life and universe of the Hmar tribe. The scope of the study is therefore limited. Its focus is on certain main economic issues such as
household, occupation, income, savings, credit and land holdings which determine their economic problems. The study aims not only to identify the factors responsible for their economic backwardness, but it also to recommends ways and means for their economic upliftment. The suggestions are to minimize dependence on traditional occupation, encouragement in saving and to set up more institutional credit.

**Significance**

One of the characteristic of Hmar economy in south Assam is overall backwardness. This backwardness is associated with their occupational practice, low income and savings, credit. This economic backwardness affects not only their economic life, but also their education, social, cultural and political too. Due to economic backwardness, they are still outside the purview of development. An attempt have been made in this to find out the main reason of Hmar backwardness in south Assam and explored in the light of the academician, policy framers and planners for future guidance. So that, the backward Hmar community should overcome their economic problems and engaged in helping the state for better and all round development. Further, our study is also expected to be helpful in giving knowledge to the scholars engaged in tribal economy, rural economy and agricultural economy of the region and also enriched the literature of tribal economy of the state.

**Limitations**

We have not covered the entire geographical area where Hmar are spread over in Assam. The primary data was collected from 17 sample Hmar villages including Hmar of Silchar town, covering seven development blocks of Cachar district of south Assam. The other Hmar villages from different villages, blocks, districts and states are not covered by this study. Further, the primary data was collected in the year 2007 to 2008 which related to their occupations, income, savings, credit, livestock, literacy, land holdings, health and family size. Secondary data for last five years information was also collected through group discussion with the sample
households that is from the year 2003. So the present study does not cover before and after the reference period of information because it is not a time-series study. It is based on 250 sample households only. This is a small sample, and therefore no valid generalization is made. Moreover, the study does not cover information on political, history and archeology of Hmar. Further the primary data is based on interview schedules and group discussions with the sample households from selected sample villages of Cachar district. A comprehensive questionnaire was not canvassed among the respondents.

1.6. Chapter Scheme

The chapters of the study are briefly designed in such a way that, the first chapter introduces the thesis. It deals with the hypotheses, contains statement of the problem, objectives, scope and limitations of the study. It is in this chapter that Chapterization scheme is proposed. The second chapter is the review of literature. It is divided into six sections. The first section deals with tribal study. A conceptual framework of underdevelopment and backwardness is given in the second section. The third section discusses the underdevelopment in terms of land and forest, and the fourth section is about the determinants of tribal poverty and backwardness in terms of occupation, income and savings. The fifth section is about state intervention under planning and the sixth section is the remarks of the chapter.

The third chapter elaborates the concepts and methods of data collection, period of field investigation, reference period and the limitation of the data. This chapter also includes sampling design, method of data analysis and statistical tools and regression analysis. The fourth chapter describes backwardness of sample Hmar. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section deals with the population, household characteristic and occupations of the Hmar tribe. The second section discusses about the land resource availability to the sample Hmar and the third section highlights methods of production in Jhum cultivation and grazing. In the fourth section, we have discussed the size-class of annual income of households and savings. In the fifth section, we analyze the credit structure and indebtedness phenomenon. The lack
of entrepreneurship, leading to backwardness of Hmar and consequent livelihood pattern is discussed in the sixth section. A couple of remarks on the economic status of the tribe are added at the last.

The fifth chapter deals with the economic backwardness of the Hmar and search for determinants. The first and second section gives the background of economic determinants and regression models. The third section is income model, in which different occupations, land ownership and savings level of Hmar sample household are treated as determining independent variables. In the fourth section, we describe the savings model in which the average monthly savings of a Hmar sample household is the dependent economic variable. We put some analytical remarks at the last.

The sixth chapter describes the non-economic forces of backwardness. The first section gives descriptions about civil amenities available to Hmar villages under consideration, health status of households and mortality of individuals. Second section deals with regression analysis of non-economic factors of family, literacy and health. The third section summarizes the constraints and problems of Hmar in the way of growth.

Conclusion of the thesis and policy prescription is discussed separately at the last.
Chapter – 2

Review of Literature on Tribal Economy
The chapter reviews the available literature on conceptual framework on tribe, meanings of underdevelopment, and dimensions of backwardness of tribes in terms of occupation, income and savings. It also deals with the trajectory of tribal growth under the Indian planning and state intervention. It is divided into six sections, grouping together similar kind of studies in each section. The first section deals with tribal study and gives the background and the second section describes the underdevelopment in its conceptual framework. The third section deals with the review of resource backwardness of the tribal in general due to underdevelopment of land and forest. The fourth section details with the determinants of tribal poverty in terms of unproductive occupation, low income and savings. In the fifth section, an attempt is made to trace growth and backwardness under planning. We put a few remarks at the last.

2.1. Tribe, Indian Constitution and Tribal Study: A Background

The concern regarding the rights and entitlements of indigenous peoples are no more the issues for the anthropologists, and bureaucrats but are also issues of public debate (Rath, 2006; Chatty and Colchester, 2002; Blaser, 2004). The indigenous people have not benefited from development projects, while the mainstream societies have prospered at their expense, pushing them deeper into the poverty trap (Mahapatra, 1991). Concentrated in remote and inaccessible areas, usually hills and forests, indigenous peoples are but not homogenous groups. They differ from one another not just in terms of their ecology, cultural identity, economic organization, and social and religious practices but also in terms of the nature of their relationship to national political and economic systems. One important characteristic they share is that wherever they live, they are at the bottom of economic and social ladders — they are among the disadvantaged groups in any society. In India, where indigenous peoples are known as “tribal people” or “tribal”, they are at the bottom of society. They are the poorest and most marginalized, oppressed, and deprived people in the country (Nathan and Kekar, 2004; Rath, 2006).
The definition of the term ‘tribe’ has long been a subject for discussion among anthropologists, but so far, there is no generally accepted definition (Naik 1968). A distinctive racial type, known by physical anthropologists as belonging to the proto-Australoid stock, they are somewhat darker than other Indians and have features that are sometimes Mongoloid in appearance. They live in their own villages, many of which are wholly homogenous. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of tribal life is the very attitude toward life itself. In contrast with their Hindu neighbors, the tribal are a carefree people, hedonistic in their simple pleasures (Mathur, 2006). These are stylized constructs about a tribe—an ideal picture. According to Oxford Dictionary "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding them as having a common ancestor. Majumdar (1986) defines tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes.

According to Ralph Linton (1963) tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests. Several anthropologists hold the view that a tribe is no different from a caste (Ghurye, 1943, 1959; Beteille, 1974; Bailey, 1960). Tribe as a category, separate from the mainstream caste society, is an invention of the British administrators. The notion of a tribe was introduced by colonial administrators. It was a part of the universal trend to dichotomize the indigenous peoples and colonizers, the savage and the civilized, the tribals and non-tribal (Singh, 1995).

Andre Beteille (1974) discusses four key criteria that have been used to distinguish a tribe from the rest of population: size, isolation, religion, and means of livelihoods. He points out that these criteria fail to support the contention that distinct tribal communities do exist in India. Beteille first considers the criterion of size and notes that anthropologists usually define tribal societies as small-scale social systems. For example, according to Lewis (1968, p.147),
“Ideally tribal societies are small in scale, are restricted in the spatial and temporal range of their social, legal and political relations, and possess a morality, religion and world view of corresponding dimensions.”

In short, it may be partially true in case of the hills tribe living in south Assam, because they are small in population. But the other states of India especially north east like Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya consists of more than 90 percent of tribal may not be true. Beteille (1974) agrees that this may be true of many tribes in Africa and elsewhere, but in India, he points out, tribes such as the Santhals, Gonds, and Bhils are large segments of the population, each numbering over a million and scattered over vast territories. Beteille notes that the second criterion—that tribal societies are isolated and lack of contact with non-tribals—is not true of Indian tribal communities, as most of them have long been living in close contact with Hindu castes and other communities. The third criterion of religion also lacks of validity; because India’s major tribal groups do not practice an animism that is distinct from the country’s mainstream Hinduism. In India, animism and Hinduism are often intertwined at the community level.

Regarding the fourth criterion, livelihood, Beteille notes that the archetypical tribal society was lacks of clear division of labor; it does not split up tasks the way of settled agriculture and family farming systems do. But Indian tribal populations do not fit that model. For example, the Birhors may follow a hunting and gathering way of life, but even they rely on some specialized households to supply baskets and utensils for daily use. In Jharkhand state, among the Mundas, the Hos, the Santhals, and the Oraons, settled agriculture is widely practiced, and, as Beteille pointed out, the family farm is the key to these tribal social systems. Beteille, (1974, p.64) concluded that in India, “there really is no satisfactory way of defining a tribal society”. On his first contact with tribal people in an Oraon village in Ranchi district, Bihar (now Jharkhand), he wrote:

“I clearly remember my initial disappointment in discovering that, although we had come to investigate proper tribals, the people who confronted us were outwardly no different from the poorer villagers one might find anywhere in rural Bihar or West Bengal.”
Tribes in the Indian Constitution

The view that there are no tribal societies in India, as described in the anthropological literature, has now gained many adherents. This raises the question of why the government of India came up with a list of “Schedule Tribes” and wrote it into the constitution. One argument is that historically, the invention and perpetuation of tribalism in India owe everything to the calculations of the governing elite. British administrators with their “classificatory urges” were the pioneers in preparing a list of “primitive tribes”, with especially elaborate detail that was based on a 1931 census (Ghosh and Sengupta, 1982). In this regard, Beteille (1974) says that “it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the list of primitive tribes reflects the demands more of administrative and political circumstance than of academic or logical rigueur”. The Indian constitution refers to tribal people as the Schedule Tribes, but it does not define tribe. Article 342 of the Indian Constitution declares that the schedule tribes are “the tribes or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities” that the President may specify by public notification. They were duly specified by the President through the constitution (schedule tribes) order of 1950.

In addition to the “schedule tribes”, the Indian Constitution names other groups who are considered in need of special protection, such as “schedule castes” and “other backward castes”. These communities, which occupy low ranks in India’s caste hierarchy, have suffered through the ages socially, culturally and economically. To uplift this community, the Constitution provides certain protective measures such as reserving slots for them in education and employment. Some castes have sought recognition as “other backward castes”, feeling that they, too, deserve constitutional guarantees. In this connection, Jha (1995) has given his classification of economic stages of Indian tribes as below: forest hunting type; the hill cultivation type; the plain agricultural type; the simple artisan type; the pastoral and cattle herder type; the folk artist type; the agricultural and non-agricultural type (sections of the tribes, working in mining and manufacturing industry); the skilled white collar job and traders type (some individuals of the families of the tribal communities are working in the offices, hospitals, factories, universities and colleges, state and central
government service owing to the facilities of reservation of seats for the schedule tribe and so on (Jha, 1995, pp. 38-9).

Anthropologically, a tribe is a social group the members of which live with a common dialect. It has a uniform social organization and possesses cultural homogeneity. Generally, it has a simple political organization and religious pattern. In reality it is very difficult to find many tribal groups in India who possess all these characteristics. The government of India however recognizes some groups as the schedule tribes. There is a view that analogous social formations are not considered as schedule tribes by government of India when tribal population is considered, the number of actual tribal population must be much more than what is mentioned as schedule tribe population (Chaudhuri, 1992).

In India there are more than 450 tribal communities, whose residences are divided into six major zones - north-western India, middle India, western India, southern India, north-eastern India and island territories (Danda, 1996). Several anthropologist and social scientist have conducted a number of research works, published books, articles etc. among the tribal communities and tribal villages of our country. In middle India, 23.8 percent of research on tribal studies has been conducted up to 1989. This zone is represented by the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. Some of the important studies in this zone are Mahapatra (1956) deals with the process of shifting cultivation and social change among the Pauria Bhuyas. Nag (1958) carried out a survey on tribal economics among the tribes of Mandala, Dilaspur, Drug and Baleghat. He deals with the tribal economy of the Baiga in the context of modern economic theories. Stephen Fuchs (1988) conducted research among the Gonds and the Bhuiyas of Eastern Mandala, where he made a comprehensive style of report of the Bhuiyas and Gond and the changes that have been taking place among them. Jha (1983) studied various aspects of the Ollar life like, population distribution, economic organization, and social structure and life cycle rites. Tribal caste interaction in West Bengal that is, ‘Bhumij-Kashtriya’ as well as ‘Tribal Rajput’, continuum were also studied by Sinha (1958).

In Western India, about 10.4 percent of tribal studies were conducted by various social scientists. The tribal belt of Western zone includes the pockets of tribal
concentration in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, Daman and Diu. As many as 35 tribes have been studied during the decade. In Maharashtra several studies were conducted among the Bhill by Gibbs (1876), Gibbs (1867), Hedberg’s (1924) and Hippolytus and O.M. Cap (1931). They wrote about the Bhil tribes related to their economy, religion, ethnographic character etc. Baden Powell (1899) deals with the origin of Lunar and Solar Aryan tribes and the Rajput clan of Rajasthan. A sociological survey of ‘Rabarisi’ of Kathiawar conducted by Mankad (1938-39), studies among Banjara tribe of Rajasthan were conducted by Vyas (1967) which presents their historical, social and economic life of the Banjara of Rajasthan alone with that of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat. Satyapal Ruhelia (1968) makes a significance contribution to the study of Gaduliya Lahor in Rajasthan, his doctoral thesis covered the population, historical background, social structure, economic life-cycle, kinship, domestic unions, Panchayat, material culture etc.

In Southern India 17.9 percent research works have been conducted (Danda, 1996). The Southern zone covers the states like-Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. During the decade 72 tribes have been already covered by different studies. In Southern India, Harkness (1932), Marshall (1873) and Rivers (1906) studies among the Tado tribes of Nilgiri in Tamil Nadu. They deal with different customs, manners, religion, languages and culture and also the problem of the communities. In Kerala, Iyer (1912) undertook the ethnographic survey of the hill and jungle tribes and the low caste people of Cochin. His description covers the tradition, origin, ceremonial rights, religious belief and occupation of the jungle and fishing communities. Iyer (1937) presents the details about their origin, tradition, sub-division, marriage practices, culture physical characteristics as well as the changing social condition of seven tribes namely, Kanikar, Malakuraban, Malapantharm, Mala Palays, Malavetam, Malarayan and Mansan. The studies among Kanikar and the Urali of Southern Travancore have been conducted by Gnanamble (1954) Mukherjee (1952), Roy (1955). They did intensive field researches in 1948 to 1949 and 1952 to 1953 and studied these tribes from the religious, social, demographic, social and psychological point of view. Thomas (1952) deals with the political and religious beliefs of the Muthuvan of Travancore. Mandelbaum (1938) studied interaction of the Kota with their neighborhood in general.
In the Island territories about 4.6 percent research work on tribal were already conducted. The Island territories include the union territories of Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Minicoyand Amindivi of the Arabian Sea. Man (1883) deals with the aboriginal inhabitants of the Andaman Nicobar Island. Cipriani (1969) conducted extensive field work among the Onge of Little Andaman.

According to the 2001 census, the population of schedule tribes in the country is 8.43 cores, (84,326,240) constituting 8.2 percent of the total population of the country. Out of this, males are 4.26 cores and females 4.17 cores, accounting for 8.01 percent and 8.40 percent of the total population of respective groups. The schedule tribe population varies among the states. The main concentration of tribal population is in central India and in the north-eastern states. Nine states together account for about four-fifths of the total tribal population of the country, but the tribal percentages of these states population vary from about 5.5 percent to 31.8 percent. On the other hand, several smaller states, notably in the north-east of the country, have much higher percentages (ranging from 64 percent to 95 percent), which account for a small proportion of tribal people in the country as a whole.

Several social scientist and anthropologists have already conducted a number of tribal studies in India. Historically, the studies on tribes have been conducted since 1774. According to Vidyarthi (1966 a; 1966b) these studies can be classified into three periods. There are: formative periods (1774-1919), the constructive periods (1920-49), and the analytical periods (1950 onwards). The formative period deals with the life, cultural and classification of tribes and caste in India. The constructive period deals with the theoretical base of anthropological researchers, which was characterized by ethnological and monographic studies with a special emphasis on research in kinship and social organization. Lastly, the analytical period deals with the systematic study of Indian villages, analytical and action oriented tribal studies. This period studied tribal communities in terms of internationals as well as in terms of differences and similarities among the tribal and non-tribal communities.

In the north eastern India, above 3.1 percent research on tribal had already made (Danda, 1996). The North Eastern India comprise of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh,
Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. In Arunachal Pradesh, 35 tribes have been studied. It is clear from the above studies that one of the important tribes of Assam namely the Hmar has not attracted any attention to the researcher regarding their economy, though they are numbers of tribal economic studies in general. All these studies show that tribes are economically backward.

2.2. Underdevelopment and Tribal Concept: A Framework

Underdevelopment’ is considered a vague terminology and used in a loose way. In fact, it conveys different meanings under different conditions and on different occasion. Simply, it implies a low level of economic and technological development, low per capita income, slow pace of development of economic institutions and outdated methods of techniques etc. It must be understood carefully that underdevelopment of a country or society does not necessarily mean that country or society is potentially poor. It simply means that developmental potentialities of the country or society have not been properly utilized as they ought to be (Lekhi, 1996). It is not easy to distinguish the term underdeveloped and development.

The word ‘underdevelopment’ represents ‘poverty’ which significantly increases through time. In fact, countries were classified as ‘poor’ or ‘rich’, using per capita real income as the basis. All poor countries were initially known after Second World War as ‘backward’. Later on, these countries were called ‘underdeveloped’. This description implied that these countries have potentialities for development but the potentialities have not been properly tapped for development purposes. Subsequently, the term ‘less-developed’ has come into use. This implies that some countries are more developed and others are less developed. But more recently the usage ‘developing’ has been commonly popular which signifies forward progress. Now, finally low income countries are called ‘third world countries’ (Lakhi, 1996). It may be therefore, in any case, poverty is one of the powerful measures to indicate underdevelopment.
It is clear from the above studies that one of the important tribes of Assam namely the Hmar has not attracted any attention to the researcher regarding their economy, though they are numbers of tribal economic studies in general. All these studies show that tribes are economically backward. According to M.P. Todaro,

“Underdeveloped economy is that economy in which there are low levels of living, absolute poverty, low per capita income, low consumption levels, poor health services, high death rates, high birth rates and dependence on foreign countries” (Jain, Mukesh Trehan, Ranju Tehran and Uppal, 2009-10, p.4).

In a tribal economy, most of the characteristic of underdeveloped economy given by Todaro are prevailed. They have low levels of living, absolute poverty, low income, low consumption levels, poor health etc. though they do not depend on foreign countries, they depend on government for their development. In a similar fashion, Prof. Gunner Myrdal defines,

“An underdeveloped country is that country in which there is a constellation of numerous undesirable conditions of work and life; output, income and levels of livings are low; many modes of production, attitude and behaviors patterns are disadvantageous, and there are unfavorable institutions. There is a general causal relationship among all these conditions” (Lakhi, 1996, p.26).

So we have learnt that underdevelopment can be characterized as low per capita income, low savings, low levels of living, unfavorable institutional set up, poor health, and pre dominance of agriculture in their occupation. Another definition of underdeveloped economy is given by Dr. Oscar Lange. According to him

“An underdeveloped economy is an economy in which the available stock of capital goods is not sufficient to employ the available labor force on the basis of modern techniques of production” (Jain and Ohri, 2006-07, p. 22).

These definitions have the merits in conveying the fact that these countries are lack of capital deficiency as the cause of underdevelopment, but at the same time; they suffer from the shortcomings of neglecting other socio-economic determinants of development. According to Bauer and Yamey,
“The term underdeveloped countries usually refer loosely to countries or regions with level of real income and capital per head of population which are low by standards of North America, Western Europe and Australia” (Jain and Ohri, 2006-07, p. 22).

Similarly, Prof. Kurihara has defined the concept of underdevelopment as

“*The most serviceable single factor of an underdeveloped economy is low per capita real income, whatever else may be said to characterize such an economy*” (Lakhi, 1996).

These two definitions also follow the same criteria of low per capita real income to define the underdevelopment. They point out the shortcomings but they do not refer to the vast human and natural potentialities of such countries. However, Prof. Myint (1957) considers that low per capita income is only one aspect of underdevelopment. The Indian Planning Commission has given a better definition of an underdeveloped country accordingly,

“*An underdeveloped economy is characterized by the co-existence is greater less degree of unutilized or underutilized man power on the other hand unexploited natural resources on the other*” (Lakhi, 1996, p. 25).

This definition pinpoints three main problems faced by underdeveloped economy. They are (a) existence of unutilized manpower, (b) existence of underutilized manpower, and (c) unexploited natural resources. In short, this definition is better as it accepts under-utilization of resources as an index of underdevelopment. But the main drawback of this definition is that it does not throw light on the causes of under-utilization of resources. This short coming has been removed to a greater extent by Eugene Staley. According to him,

“*An underdeveloped country is a country characterized by mass poverty which is a chronic and not the same temporary misfortune and by absolute methods of production and social organization which means that the poverty is not entirely due to poor natural resources and hence, could presumably be lessened by methods already proved in other countries*” (Lakhi, 1996, p. 25).
The majority of the people in underdeveloped countries generally possessed low level of income because of their extremely low level of production. Therefore, poverty is reflected in very low per capita income as compared with other developed countries. According to Meier and Baldwin, underdeveloped countries are economically backward because,

“these countries are low labor efficiency, factor immobility, and limited civilization in occupation and in trade, economic ignorance, values and social structure that minimizes the incentives for economic change” (Lakhi, 1996, p.43).

Therefore, low labor efficiency results from general poverty which further is reflected in low nutritional standards, ill health, illiteracy and lack of training and occupational mobility. The labor supply is not governed by wages rate but cultural and psychological factors. This occupational immobility of labor is also due to joint family system and caste system.

Backwardness and tribal backwardness has been defined in various ways depending upon the approach the one takes (Joshi, 1998). All the definitions of backwardness are based on arbitrary points of backwardness and development. However we should note some approached. The classical anthropological approach defines backwardness in terms of culture. From the evolution of culture point of view, there is obvious distinction between ‘primitive’ and civilized’, between ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ societies, between ‘scattered’ and ‘dense’ population and above all between pre-state (autonomous) society and societies that have developed state. This kind of evolutionary approach also delineates various stages of economic development on which different civilizations can be placed. Tribal backwardness is termed as ‘primitive’ in this parlance, because they are considered to be on lower stage of development. It also believed that if tribal are put in contact with advanced culture, they will learn and develop. People from ‘civilized world’ become a sort of change agent when they come into contact with tribal.

Taking tribal as isolated from the mainstream of Indian culture several people have opined that this isolation should break and cultural contacts with the non-tribal will
help them in overcoming their backwardness. Several anthropologists in India have tried to prepare scale of development and placed various tribal communities somewhere on this scale after measurement. All tribal development programmes have a basic assumption that the development administration will help tribal improve themselves. Not only that but some of the officers believe that they are there to develop tribals. This has happened but only partially. On the other hand, the non-tribal intervention has created certain problems like pauperization, land alienation and seasonal migration-new phenomena, unknown to tribes.

Indian social scientists have found the genesis of backwardness in both economic as well as social situations. The world ‘social’ has been identified with caste and hence ‘defective caste structure’ is considered to be the genesis of backwardness. Following paragraphs lucidly describes the genesis of backwardness in terms of caste:

“It has been noted already that the problem of backwardness has arisen on account of the defective Hindu social order. Even Islam and Christianity could not escape the all-pervasive influence of caste….Many representatives who met us, and especially those of younger generation, attributed the present plight of a large number of the backward classes to economic backwardness and suggested with a facile logic that the only way to remove social evils was to improve the economic conditions of the depressed and backward classes. The economic backwardness of a large majority is certainly alarming, and in itself constitutes a colossal problem. But we must recognize that in India economic backwardness is often the result and not the cause of social evils. Our society was not built on an economic structure, but on the medieval ideas of ‘varna’, caste and social hierarchy” (Joshi, 1998, p. 19).

The idea of attributing backwardness to caste system has relevance in terms of tribal backwardness also. Because it was postulated that the tribes were ‘backward Hindus’—a part of Hindu society and they were to be absorbed in the larger Hindu system with the help of the process of sanskritization. However, the process of development that started was a secular one of the linking tribal economy with national economy—that started penetrating in tribal region. The very development process has created stratification on secular lines within tribal community.
Tribal concept

The British notion of tribal backwardness stems from their notion of cultural backwardness. The British policy tried to separate tribals from the non-tribals. When British entered tribal areas, there were encounters and uprisings. Hence, the administration of such regions was separated from civil administration. This came to be known as ‘non-regulation system’. It was believed that this system, with its “simple methods of administration and avoidance of complicated rules and procedure, was peculiarly suited to aboriginal race” (Sinha, 1970, p. 6). In 1874, the Schedule Districts Act was passed as a result of which civil and criminal justice, settlement operations and revenue works were given to special officers in this area. The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for ‘excluded areas’ and ‘partially excluded areas’ outside the scope of the legislature and under the authority of the Governor. Various such acts were passed to tribal areas from rest of India. Of course, such a separation was arbitrary, because there was no clear demarcation between the tribals and the non-tribals. Verrier Elwin’s approach should be evaluated in this context, but unfortunately his British birth came in the way of the better appreciation of his views. Some of his views on tribal problem still have relevance.

The British policy of isolation was opposed by the nationalists. They were very clear that the tribals were part of Indian society (or Hindu society as some have put it). The ground for this approach was prepared by Shri A.V. Thakkar, popularly known as Thakkarbapa, and some workers of ‘Servants of India Society’ who did pioneering work among the tribes. Many nationalist leaders supported tribal movements against the British. Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, opposed the segregation of tribals from rest of India. It asked its workers to go to tribal areas, establish as her arms and prepare them for the national struggle. Opposing British policy of isolation of tribals was a part of its anti-British and nationalist ideology. Hence, it naturally considered assimilation of tribals with the non-tribal India.

Until independence, the general trend among sociologists and anthropologists was to study the social and cultural aspects of tribal life. The question of what to do with the
tribes did not bother them much. For them, it was clear that they were part of the Indian society and they believed that the difference between the tribals and non-tribals would gradually vanish and the tribals will merge in the mainstream. The only problem was to speed up this process with as much ease as possible. From the above definitions given by different writers, we can understand that ‘underdevelopment’ means poor economy, backward economy, less developed, laggard economy. Underdeveloped economy is characterized by low per capita income, low savings, unutilized or underutilized manpower, primary occupations like agriculture predominate, mass poverty, technological backwardness, low consumptions level, poor health, high birth rates, low levels of living, many modes of production and unfavorable institutions.

Though, the tribal did not have such large economy as it is mentioned in the general economic theories. But, most of the characteristic of underdevelopment which we find in general theories were prevail in tribal economy. So, we can conclude by saying that tribal have a very low income which is not sufficient for savings. They have a very simple and traditional type of occupations, the technique of production they used was primitive and there is no scope for scientific method. They practiced agriculture and at the same time they combine others occupation like business, service, collection of wild roots, trapping etc. In most of the tribal areas, important institutions like health, credit, education etc are absent. So, we can understand that tribal economy is less developed economy, backward economy, laggardness or underdeveloped economy, because they have possess all the characteristic of underdevelopment which is mentioned by various general economic theories. Because of their economic backwardness, many scholars of India are engaged in tribal studies to understand their nature of backwardness.

2.3. Resource Backwardness: Land and Forest

Land has been the most important household asset for households that always depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. Access to land has been a basic requirement for farming. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for all the
Indian tribes. In fact, it is not possible to think of agriculture without the use of land. The size of land holdings owned by the household determines its economic and social position in the society (Sadhu and Singh, 1996). This is an interdependent relation between land and agriculture. Besides agriculture, it also provides space for building house, roads etc. The system of land ownership differs from place to place. In most of the tribal areas of the world, land is owned by the community as a whole. In short, land has been an economic resource in agriculture as well as a social property in tribal settlement. Among the tribes, cultivable land (including the land for homestead and kitchen garden) and the forest are crucial resources. In case, the tribes are alienated from land and leftover land is not put to beneficial uses, this would set in backwardness. In modern age, deforestation and uprooting from the forest area have played havoc with the traditional livelihood pattern of tribes. This in turn has led to keep the tribes to remain underdeveloped.

The British interfered in the tribal region for the purpose of exploiting the tribal natural resources. Coupled with this, tribal lands were occupied by moneylenders, Zamindars and traders by advancing them loans etc. Opening of mines in the heart of tribal habitat and even a few factories provided wage labor as well as opportunities for factory employment. But this brought increasing destitution and displacement. When the British came to power, the forest policy of the British Government was more inclined towards commercial considerations rather than human. Some forests were declared as reserved ones where only authorized contractors were allowed to cut the timber and the forest -dwellers were kept isolated deliberately within their habitat without any effort to ameliorate their economic and educational standards. The expansion of railway in India also heavily devastated the forest resources in India. The Government started reserving teak, Sal and deodar forests for the manufacture of railway sleepers. Forest land and its resources have always provided the best means of livelihood for the tribal people and many tribes including the women have been engaged in agriculture. For food gathering and hunting they are heavily dependent on the products of the forest. Therefore when outsiders exploit the tribal land and its resources the natural life cycle of tribal ecology and tribal life is greatly disturbed. Because of the under development of tribal land and forest, many researchers are engaged in the study of tribal backwardness in terms of land and forest. Some of the studies are:
Ramaiah (1981), in his book “Tribal Economy of India. (A Case Study of Koyas of Andhra Pradesh)” studies the economy of the Koyas tribe of Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. According to him, the nature of tribal economy in the district was predominantly agricultural based. Where forestry, which was one of the two sectors of the economy in the schedule areas of the Warangal district plays a very significant role in absorbing the employable surplus and thus help to solve the twin problems of excessive pressure on land and under employment in these areas. Forestry also plays another role in boosting up the tribal economy and providing gainful employment for the forest dwellers. The main problem of agriculture in the tribal areas is the problem of ownership of land. Though the survey and settlements operation were completed in the Telengana area in general and in Warangal district in particular, there are few cases where the tribals do not enjoy the patta rights. The fundamental limitation of agriculture in the tribal areas is the size of holdings. This proves an impediment in the application of improved techniques. Due to the shortage of land and the prevailing cropping pattern, scope for the cultivation of green manure plants is restricted but the green manure is available in plenty in forest areas. Irrigation has a vital role to play of agriculture and its proper use helps in increasing production by enabling the cultivators to use more fertilizers to adopt double cropping etc.

Roa (1987) in his book, “Land Alienation in Tribal Areas” has made a deep analysis of the past studies conducted on tribal problem in the pre-independence and post-independence era. Rao observes that, the analysis of the problems in three tribal villages in Andhra Pradesh shows that the process of land alienation is not an ‘accidental one’. In the name of protection of the interest of the tribal’s, several laws were enacted by the legislature, but there are bottlenecks and loopholes in these legislations. To understand, the root cause of the problem of land alienation among the tribal. Roa made an attempt to assess the historical facts relating to the crucial problems. He also analyses the various process of alienation of the tribal land. Among the lacunae he points out improper land survey and settlements, un-systematized administration, passing of regulations mutually contradictory in nature, limited and inadequate personnel in the enormous administrative organization, systematic and anti-tribal bias of the official, judicial delays and cumbersome record system legalized the ten existing land structures and relations, while ignoring the
claims and prospect of the real owners. Thus, in the process of alienation, not only has the land become alienated, but the state itself became an alien to them with its anti-tribal activities. The findings of the study reveal that the efforts of the government had not mitigated the problems of the tribal’s regarding land and other allied assets but had tried to promote a sort of dependency culture among the tribal’s and the tribal became economically backward in the region.

Lakshmaiah (1990) in his article “Socio-Economic Development of Tribals” examined the problem of socio-economic development of the tribal’s of Andhra Pradesh and he made a case study of Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh. According to him, safeguards like protective laws relating to land, debt relief, and money-lending have been implemented and special attention has been paid to help the tribal’s by establishing an institutional network. Programmes like agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, special nutrition programme, housing and water supply, communication, cooperation, women welfare, rural crafts have been introduced to achieve integrated development in the district. Although rigorous efforts have been made through planned development in the district, the major problems remains unsolved, such as increasing pressure on land, land alienation, lack of proper irrigation sources, wide gap between production of food grains and the requirement, indebtedness, low rate of illiteracy, inadequate communications facilities, unsatisfactory location of health facilities, inadequate veterinary facilities. Improved communication in the district has helped mostly non-tribal to enter interior areas and exploit the tribal’s. The alienation of tribal land is on-going process. A few suggestion are made by the author to mitigate the intensity of tribal problem and hasten the process of development in the district like, stringent steps to safeguard the interest of tribal with reference to their land, indebtedness, special provision for their education and employment, proper understanding of the socio-cultural dimension of the tribal life-norms, values and taboos, loan procedures should be simplified and availability of all loans from a single credit institution should be ensured, constant watch on non-tribal moneylenders, trades etc,

Murty (2005) in his article, “Agrarian Relation in Tribal Areas of Andra Pradesh: Are the Conditions Brewing for a Heightened Tribal Land Alienation?” studies the tribal land alienation in relation to agriculture in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh. The
paper seeks to examine the economic and living condition of the schedule tribe households so as to draw them into a situation where the forces and relations of production work to their disadvantages so that, the result of land under their control gets increasingly alienated from them. Murty reported that, the landless tribal households in the study region formed 31.38 percent of the total tribal households and private owned land constitute 68.62 percent in 2002-03. The private lands are mostly small and marginal ones having less than 5 acres and constitute 93.5 percent of all households. The tribal’s were found to be in a possession of three types of owned land- owned land with title, owned land without title and podu land without title. The land tenure pattern had been changing over time. The proportion of tribal households owning land, which was 90 percent in the year 1988-89 come down to 68.62 percent during the period of survey (2002-03) and the land lease market had become more active over time. There was an increasing trend in the proportion of owned land leased out from 2.81 percent to 5.09 percent over the reference period. Another worrisome development over the years is the emergence of the practice of leasing-out land under un- sufructuary mortgage. Given the endemic poverty of the tribal’s, the land once mortgaged –out could never remain so, or could even be sold once for all. Out of the total area devoted to cultivation, major land are use to paddy cultivation (31.63 percent), other cereals (33.39 percent) and commercial crops (15.81 percent). The productivity of land here was extremely low. In spite of the legislative provision to safeguards their land, tribal are driven out from their land by the non-tribal. The quality of land held by them is so poor and it cannot promise them any reasonable returns.

Rupavath (2009) in his published book “Tribal Land Alienation and Political Movements: Socio-Economic Patterns from South India”, examines ‘the pattern of socio-economic development, tribal land alienation and political movement in Adilabad and Khammam Districts of Andhra Pradesh’. He have focuses on the process of land alienation going on since the colonial period, the skewed pattern of socioeconomic development in the tribal area after independence and the resulting political movements in two districts of Andhra Pradesh. According to him, the processes of land alienation is due to the entry of non-tribal, commoditization of land, introduction of cash crops etc., which began under the feudal and oppressive Nizam state in Telengana and continued due to the policies of the colonial state. The
study shows that after independence the land transfer regulation act and the various developmental programmes introduced into the tribal area have not been able to remedy the situation. The study reveals that landlessness, unemployment, poverty and increasing social alienation from hostility towards non-tribal’s is increasing in these regions. The study concludes that unless tribal lands and economy are protected in future, and a pattern of development better suited to their way of life is introduced, tribal oppression and movements arising from the tribal in Andhra Pradesh will continue.

*Kumar and Choudhary (2005)* in their joint paper, “A Socio-Economic and Legal Study of Schedule Tribes’ Land in Orissa” study the economy and land of tribal Orissa. According to Kumar and Choudhary, schedule tribes, which constitute twenty-two percent of Orissa’s population are the most marginalized and poor social group in the State and over 72 percent living under the poverty line. Though land and land based resources are central to the livelihoods of tribal people, they have poor access to land and forests. Most of the tribal communities in Orissa have strong cultural and social relationship with land and many tribal practicing communal ownership of land, especially swidden land. During the last two centuries, tribal communities have been affected by land loss through alienation of plain lands to non-tribal’s and the swidden lands to the State, which has categorized these areas as forest land or revenue lands. The loss of private land holdings by tribal’s have been a cause of concern with a number of laws being passed by both pre-independence state and post-colonial state to check land alienation. These laws suffered from many shortcomings and were unable to check transfer of land from tribal’s to non-tribal. The joint studies also reveals that the poor access of tribal land is not only the outcome of land alienation to non-tribal’s, but is also the outcome of land and forest policies followed by the State. The low level of land holdings of the tribals are an important factor behind their poverty as a social group.

*Sen (2011)*, in his article, “Separatism in North Bengal: Adding to Tribal Woes” studies the tribal economy with special reference to land alienation. According to him, the tribal’s of North Bengal are socially and economically most backward, oppressed and easy vulnerable community. The process of immigration of the tribal people in North Bengal began in the 19th century. Immediately after the suppression
of Santal rebellion, the Santals in order to avoid police harassment began to pour in North Bengal crossing Ganges across Rajmahal. Two groups of Santals arrived in North Bengal. One group settled in Pakuahat under Bamongola police station in Malda and the other group settled at Hili in Dinajpur district. The Zamindars of these two districts began to employ the Santals for reclaiming their waste land on very liberal terms. The Santals of Malda, South and North Dinajpur took agriculture as their means of living. But in Terai-Duars tribal from Chotonagpur were employed as tea garden labourers. From 1880 onwards tea garden had began to be established in the Terai-Deuars region. With the establishment of tea gardens Oraon, Mundas and Santals were brought to serve as tea garden labourers. Sen observes that, alienation of land is the main cause of their poverty.

All these studies together highlight the economic backwardness of tribal in terms of underdevelopment of land and forest where they settled. Tribal are alienated from their land since the pre-independence and continuing till today, due to various projects works implemented by government and non government in different parts of our country and the entry of non-tribal into tribal areas. Now, tribal are characterized by number of landless and marginal land holdings which result in low level of production. The quality of land held by them is so poor; it cannot promise them any reasonable returns. Poverty has therefore become epidemic for a large part of the tribal in India. Due to land alienation, large numbers of tribal are forced to depend on forest land for their livelihood. All the above literature reviews suggest that, tribal lands are to be protected as earlier as possible so as to overcome backwardness and poverty. In the next section, we discuss tribal poverty due to low level of occupational choice which results in low level of income and savings.

2.4. Determinants of Tribal Poverty:

Occupation, Low Income and Savings

Poverty can be defined as a social phenomenon in which a section of the society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities of life. When a substantial segment of a society is deprived of the minimum level of living and continues at a bare substance
level, that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty (Datt and Sundaram, 2004). According to United Nations, Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society such as lack of enough food to feed and lack of clothe in a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (United Nations, 2011, p.5). According to World Bank, poverty is pronounced as deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one’s life (World Bank, 2005, p. 4). In short poverty is characterized by lack of minimum levels of living and basic necessities of life.

On the other hand, occupation and income is also an important indicator of socio-economic condition of a community. A community with higher income level can meet their basic needs and enjoy their livelihoods (Abu, Mullah, Parveen and Ahshanullah, 2007). Occupation means the various ways by which one earns his living by engaging him or herself. Social scientist and economist have always shown a keen interest in income, for instances in their economic inequality and poverty, and in most surveys containing question on economic and social well-being, the only measure of access to economic resources is income. Indeed, income is an important (arguably, the most important) component of any access to economic resources, thus deserving careful investigation of its own (Christelis, Japelli, Paccagmella and Weber, 2006). In other words, income is an important indicator of socio-economic condition of a community. A community with higher income can meet their basic needs and enjoy their livelihood. The main source of household income is service, agriculture and business (Abu, Mullah, Parveen and Ashanullah, 2007). Since, agriculture is one of the most important sources of income for all the tribal’s in India. The tribes of northeast India living in the hill areas mainly practice jhum (shifting
cultivation). A few small communities living in the extremes of the north eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh and the eastern boundary of Nagaland carry on non-monetized exchange system. These tribes are involved in market economy through a large number of weekly and by-weekly rural markets. The shifting cultivators also supplement their earning working as wage laborers and petty businessmen (Ali and Das, 2003). The common practiced of agriculture is Shifting (Jhum) cultivation. In a typical Jhum model the system produced itself at the end of every production period, production was for subsistence only. In other words, the system produced just enough to maintain itself; it did not produce any effective surplus. There was no accumulation and investment for surplus for ‘expanded reproduction’ and no effective growth of output from year to year. It was a sort of stationary that the method of production did not entail any substantial imported from outside the system to pay for imports and or accumulation (Ganguly, 2006). In the words of Arthur Lewis, a vast majority of agriculturists and more especially the agricultural labor, hundreds and thousands of casual workers working for just a few coins (Shrivastava, 1996).

A majority of tribes follow very simple occupations based on simple technology. Most of their occupations fall into the primary occupations such as hunting, gathering, and agriculture. They used simple and primitive technology. There is no profit and surplus making in such economy. Hence there per capita income is very meager much lesser than that of the Indian average. Due to practice of traditional occupation, their income is low which is not sufficient for saving. In the words of Saxena (1964) agriculture forms the principle source of livelihood of the overwhelming section of the population. As a result, dependency ratio on agriculture was more pronounced than that of the country as a whole. The fact that stands mostly in the picture of tribal economy was the general mass poverty of the populations. The economies of these tribes are subsistence type and generally their standard of living was below the level of subsistence. There was acute unemployment and under-employment for a good part of the year. Due to low return in agriculture, production is not sufficient for commercialization. The tribal do not know the new changes and invention in different fields of production. Their methods and implements of cultivations are very primitive. They do not know anything about
trade and commerce. Hence the economic status of Indian tribes is very much backward (Sharma, 1994).

Most of them live under abject poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and Zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these moneylenders. Livestock is another key asset in rural areas. In many countries, livestock is one of the most valuable agricultural assets and represents a source of income and wealth accumulation as well as an important source of resistance to shocks. Draught animals are also the main source of power for ploughing, land clearing and transportation in many regions. Apart from any religious connotations, livestock and cattle, in particular, have special significance in the tribal economy. In all but the exceptionally dry areas, they are not kept primarily for the production of meat or milk, but as essential components of the subsistence production systems on arable land (Danckwerts, 1974). Social scientists and economists have always shown a keen interest in income, savings and credit. For instance in their studies of economic inequality and poverty, and in most surveys containing questions on economic and social well-being, the only measure of access to economic resources is income, savings and credit. Indeed, income is an important (arguably, the most important) component of any measure of access to economic resources, thus deserving careful investigation on its own. Majority tribes live under poverty line. The tribes follow very simple occupations based on simple technology and the income from their occupation is low which is not sufficient to save. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive type. There is no profit and no surplus making in such economy. Hence their per capita income is very meager much lesser than the Indian average. Most of them live under abject of poverty and are in debt in the hands of local moneylenders and Zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the moneylenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these moneylenders.

Like the rest of the peoples of the world, the tribal’s of our country need credit to meet their economic and social needs. We know that the tribal economy mainly depends on agriculture. To raise productions, they need timely credit to purchase
seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, hiring labor, irrigation, tractors etc. with a low rate of interest. Professor John D. Black has rightly stated, “If we are all concerning about increasing total agricultural output in the shorter time, we must provide credit first and foremost” (Sadhu and Singh, 1996, p.292). So, timely credit is very important to uplift the tribal economy. But, unfortunately, institutional credit facilities are scarce in tribal areas of our country and even if it is available, it needs capital in terms of proper land documents in their names. Most of the tribal are residing in communal owned land, forest reserved land and it is not possible for them to produce such documents to avail loan. In time of emergency, majority of the tribal run after money-lenders and traders.

So, indebtedness is one of the major problems of the tribes. They are being exploited for the last several generations by moneylenders and Dikus. Their economic conditions are poor. They run under deficit budget. Moneylenders take advantage of it and exploit them as much as they can. At a time of urgent need, they have no alternative, but to take loans from moneylenders at an exorbitant rate of interest. At any cost, and any rate, one has to take money from moneylenders to overcome urgent financial needs (Sinha, 1990, p.168). There are some studies on tribal poverty which is conducted by various researchers related to their occupational income and savings, such as

Saxena (1964), in his book “Tribal Economy in Central India” study the economy of the tribal in western central India covering the five tribes of the country, namely, the Bhills, the Bhilalas, the Saharas, the Gonds, and the Korkus. According to him, the tribal communities of Central India present a pattern of economic culture which cannot be fitted in the absolute un-linear classes as suggested by the earlier economist like Adam Smith, List and Hildebrand. These tribal communities are a mixture of various elements, that is, from food gleaning to agriculture and from barter to credit. They are all settled agriculture with same economic impulses and motivates as we find in the agricultural communities of rural India. All the tribal are engaged in production, distribution, exchange and consumption of wealth like other rural communities of India. The whole studies of the economy of these tribes are a study of rural economics. The only feature that differentiates their economy was appalling poverty and exploitation by more advanced non-tribal communities. For all
these tribes, agriculture forms the principle source of livelihood of the overwhelming section of the population. As a result, dependency ratio on agriculture was more pronounced than that of the country as a whole. The secondary source of their livelihood was forest. The fact that stands mostly in the picture of tribal economy was the general mass poverty of the populations. The economies of these tribes are subsistence type and generally their standard of living was below the level of subsistence. There was acute unemployment and under-employment for a good part of the year. Saxena reported that, the tribal economy was also characterized by disinvestment; there are no savings to fall back upon in lean years. The scarcity period was tided over by collection of minor forest product. When the agricultural scarcity happens to coincide with forest scarcity the tribal population became destitute even more. Wild fruits, roots and leaves provide sustenance to a large number of tribal populations. The poor standard of living in the tribal communities was associated with the mental apathy as well as higher rate of growth of population which further tends to lower the standard of living. Substantial improvement in the standard of living was the only way of breaking it. The poverty of the tribal people was responsible for large size of their population which threatens to grow larger every year. The increasing pressure of population on land tends to diminish the existing standard of living.

Ramaiah (1981), in his book “Tribal Economy of India. (A Case Study of Koyas of Andhra Pradesh)” studies the economy of the Koyas tribe of Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh. Where Warangal district is the third largest district having a tribal population, and the dominant tribe in that district was the Koyas tribe. According to Ramaiah, the nature of tribal economy in the district was predominantly agricultural based. The problems faced by the tribal in general are credit and marketing. In the tribal areas credit and marketing are provided by one on the same agency, that is, the shocker in the past. This facilitated control over the tribal and the tribal economy. Ever since the tribal were brought under planned development but, the credit needs of the tribal increased manifolds. Various developmental agencies have taken up the challenge of meeting the credit requirements of the tribal farmers. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency had been established in 1975-76 in the tribal areas of Warangal district to solve the problems faced by the tribal in an integrated way and try to promote integrated development of the tribal areas but the credit requirements
are still limited. The tribal economy was uni-sectoral economy. To accelerate the economic development of the tribal areas it has to be diversified. The secondary sector in the schedule areas needs greater and specific attention and along with the primary sector to bring about sustained growth in the tribal economy.

_Choudhury_ (1981), in his article “The Problem of Development of Small Tribes” studies the economic backwardness of the small tribal communities in India and the need for their uplift. According to him, all the larger tribes have agriculture as their subsistence economy. They are settled and occupy more or less permanent villages. But it was not so with the small tribes. Their occupational pattern, particularly of the very small tribes, shows a wide range of variation from primitive hunting and food gathering to agriculture. The small tribes are engaged in rope-making, animal trapping and birds catching, begging, basket-making, and cattle-rearing and so on. This diversity of the occupational pattern makes the problem of planning extremely difficult for the small tribal communities. A good number of small tribes are nomadic or semi-nomadic. These tribes in small groups composed of few families like the Birhor of Bihar and Orissa, move from one place to another and do not have any permanent dwellings. Consequently, the lack of developmental leaves them outside the orbit of development. As a case study, the author brings two small tribes who have been subjected to development programmes during the last decades so as to show the developmental work has been far from satisfactory. They are: i) The Onges of little Andaman; ii) The Mech of West Bengal.

_Mahapatra_ (1987), in his book “Economic Development of Tribal India”, studies the problem of economic backwardness and poverty of the tribal in Koraput districts of Orissa, where tribal constitutes 55.21 percent of the total population of the district. According to him, the main stay of the economy of the tribal in Koraput district was agriculture. As high as 93.34 percent of the schedule tribe workers are either cultivators or agricultural labors and less than seven percent of them are engaged in other types of economic activities such as lives stock, forestry, fishing and hunting. But such large dependence on agricultural activities does not help in improving their primitive economy. The agricultural implements they used were crude primitive and inefficient, weeding and the used of modern agricultural implements are rare and manufacturing was still novelty. Besides agriculture, shifting cultivation was also
widely practiced by the hill tribes inhabited in different regions of the district. In spite of different welfare measures undertaken by the government, Mahapatra found that 17.94 percent of the tribal households practiced shifting cultivation.

Adhikary (1990) in his article “System of Exchange among the Tribals: A Case Study of the Santal in a Village of Birbhum, West Bengal” discussed the economy, pattern of exchange and the nature of economic interaction of a major tribal community known as the Santals who practice settle cultivation. According to him, the Santal are broadly known as an agricultural tribes, their direct access to land is marginal. In this area, they pursue agriculture mostly as tenant cultivators. Many of the Santal earn their livelihood as casual agricultural laborers. Some people are also work as casual laborers in non-agricultural sector. According to the author, the Santals have a limited idea of good. Their desires and expectations of economic spheres of life are very limited. They hardly think of making surplus production or increasing income and accumulation for future. They are concerned primarily with the present and desire for two square meals a day, a few clothes a year, a house to live in, and disease-free disposition having ample scope for pleasure. This orientation towards pleasures which forms an important aspect of their outlook on life and society, indeed, stands in their way of individual saving and accumulation. Lastly, the author point out that the flow of material goods as well as the system of exchange among the Santals can be understood not only in terms of the meaningful world they form with their ancestral spirits and supernatural deities but also in terms of the underlying spirit of their transaction. The Santals gear their exchange with a sense of altruism and give more value on gift and mutual help as a social necessity.

Sinha (1990) in his article “Changing Dimension of Tribal Economy in Chotanagpur with Special Reference to their Problems among the Korwa Tribe” study the economy, indebtedness and other economic problems of the Korwa tribe of central India. The author reported that, due to difference in the nature of economy, the economic life of Korwa differs from region to region. The Korwa agriculture is typically Indian in the sense that, the cultivators have to depend upon monsoon. They have no irrigations facilities even though the government has dug wells for both drinking and irrigational purposes. But the Korwas are not in a position to be benefited as they are living far away from their land. Agricultural implements were
introduced from outside. The main implements of the Korwas are plough hoe, axe, spade and sickle. They also use a number of iron and wooden implements for their agricultural activities. The choice of seed is more important but, unfortunately, the Korwa do not know how to select the best seeds and to preserve them. The plain Korwa know little about, but the hills Korwa are quite ignorant. They used any type of seeds available in the market and they are unable to save grains for seeds because the yield is not sufficient. According to Sinha, animal husbandry is also an important part of Korwa economy. In tribal agricultural economy where the facilities of modern implements are missing, cattle is of great importance for agricultural operations, transportation and manure. Animals are kept for breeding, manure protection etc. A number of cows were kept for milking in addition to the production of further heads of cattle. Those who do not possess bullocks can only borrowed a pair of bullocks from others from one day, for which they have to work for two days, at the cattle owner’s field. The economy of the Korwa is still primitive. They have adopted all the traditional style of cultivation due to which the yield is very poor and they are economically hard pressed.

Goswami (1995) in his book “Tribals in Transition: A Socio-Economic Study”, study the socio-economic aspect of the Schedule tribe(Plains) communities of the Barak Valley of Assam particularly the Barman tribe to analyze the extent of transition that has been taking place in the life of the Barman community during the post independence period. Goswami reported that, some important changes in the form of occupational pattern had been taking place in the tribal communities of Barak valley. During the British period, the Barman maintained their livelihood by hunting, fishing, and hill-agriculture and plains agriculture too. They had freedom to hunt and collect fuel and timber. The village economy was self – sufficiency in accordance with their limited felt-needs. As a result of settlement of pattas provided to the people from East Pakistan, the jungles had been cleared in many villages after independence. As a result, the number of games like deer, , wild fowls, pigs etc is drastically decreasing and the land used for jhum cultivation have now become dwelling places. The percentage of workers in the primary sector is increasing due to the lack of other gainful employment opportunities in the rural areas which result in increasing manpower and overcrowding agriculture. There is no change in the technological structure of agriculture. The use of modern agricultural technology in
the tribal community is far from encouraging. The irrigation facilities are scanty, the areas under multiple cropping has not increased much. It has been shown that top income class forming 13 percent of the tribal population of Barak Valley. Their per capita income are about rupees.3000.00 only while about three-fourth of the population has less than rupees.2000.00 as per capital income. According to him, above five percent of the population are living below poverty line (BPL).

*Kashyap and Kumar* (1998) in their joint paper entitled “Tribal Rajasthan: A Scenario”, studies the tribal economy of Rajasthan. According to the authors, most of the tribal in Rajasthan except Mina’s lives in remote and dense forest areas and their livelihood depend upon the forest product and marginal agriculture. Their agriculture is mainly subsistence type and based on sporadic rains. The study reveals that, about 34.86 percent of the tribal populations belong to main workers category and 11.56 percent of them belong to marginal workers category, and also 53.58 percent belong to non-workers category. Out of the main worker category, 89.66 percents of the total tribal populations are engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly. Whereas about 76.12 percent of them depend on agricultural occupation directly, 13.54 percent belong to agriculture laborers class and the remaining 10.34 percent are engaged in other types of activities such as, forestry, animal husbandry, mining and quarrying, construction and other households industries. The tribal work participation rate in Rajasthan is 46.42 percent which is higher than the total population of the state in general, which is only 38.87 percent. As regards gender wise work participation rate, for the tribal males it is 51.81 percent and for the females 40.62 percent. The tribal female work participation is also higher than that of the non-tribal population which is only 31.34 percent. Because of extreme poor literacy level of the tribal females, the young girls are forced to participate in economic activities in their early age. After 1952, development programmes like Community Development Projects (CDPs) have been introduced in the tribal areas of Rajasthan to improve their economic, socio-cultural conditions, introduction of Tribal Development Blocks in the Third Five Year plan. Introduction of family oriented schemes, Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) and Agricultural Labor Development Agencies (MFALDA) were introduced in the fourth plan. But according to the authors, all these programmes did not succeed fully because they could not remove the old-age exploitative mechanism prevails in the tribal areas.
Further, the tribal of Rajasthan still facing problems like health practices and awareness, problems created by the tourist culture, seasonal unemployment and migratory practices, general lack of awareness, education and poverty continually affect them.

*Murty (2005)* in his article, “Agrarian Relation in Tribal Areas of Andra Pradesh: Are the Conditions brewing for Heightened Tribal Land Alienation?” Study the tribal land alienation in relation to agriculture in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh. According to Murty, Income arising from differential crops net of paid-out costs was as a rule less than rupees.1000 and even when it exceeded rupees.1000 mark, as in case of fruits, vegetables and commercial crops, it was barely so. On the average the net income from cultivation in the study area was merely rupees.753 per acre or rupees.1, 978 per households for the year 2002-03. The activities that kept the tribal’s during the surveyed period were mainly agricultural labor, cultivation, collection and sale of non timber forest product (NTFP). Cultivation brought little income to the tribal households. Next, the limited enjoined upon the tribal to collect non timber forest product served was only to occupy their time with no commensurate benefits. As large as 36.70 percent of the tribal households occupied in the collection and sale of non timber forest product during the year, but the occupational brought them only 4.08 percent of the total income. The annual income derived by the tribal from all sources in 2002-03 was merely rupees.9, 687 on an average per households or rupees.174 per capita per month. The poor peoples in the study region formed 90.5 percent of all the tribal households in the year. It was much higher than the estimate of 66.0 percent for 1988-89 of the tribal for the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh as reported by National Sample Survey. The author also estimate poverty among the tribal of the region on the basis of the assumption of both their cultivation and agricultural labor incomes in a normal year, talking the output of food grains as the norms (the food grains output was on an average 77.93 percent of the normal in 2002-03 in the four districts under study), he worked out to 65.7 percent poverty. The magnitude of poverty is so high and forced the tribal to sell their land. Further, indebtedness of the tribal households also very high, the tribal households having outstanding dues formed about 66 percent of all households. Those having outstanding dues to money lenders formed 22.13 percent and to traders 8.98 percent. These two informal sources of credit accounted for 40.83 percent of the
total outstanding loans. Of the total, the dues owned to the institutional agencies constituted 34.17 percent and the rest 65.83 percent were from the non institutional agencies. The dues bearing interest rates in excess of 36 percent formed 35.5 percent of the total in the year, but in 1988-89 the interest rates was only 18 percent accounted for 77.6 percent of the total. Loans taken for productive purpose has been declined and those for non productive purpose had increased and the tribal’s are driven into financial difficulties.

Panda (2009) in his article “Tribal Development: Imperatives and Compulsions” study the economic backwardness of tribals in relation to their occupational practice with special reference to Orissa state. According to him, to check and prevent shifting cultivation is another need for tribal development. Tribals were the original settlers of the Indian soil, hence called primitive or aborigines. For a long period, dependence of the tribal’s on the forest for their sustenance was undisputed. Forest is intimately connected with tribal life and economy. To a vast majority of the tribal people, forest is their well loved home and their livelihood. Their very existence depends on it. It gives them food, fruits of all kinds, edible roots and leaves. Although, each family living in a forest village is allotted some land for cultivation, no tenancy rights are conferred to the tillers. Neither Patta is given to this effect nor can they enjoy any permanent right to cultivate the land. Shifting cultivation is one such example.

From the above literature reviews, we can understand that the determinants of tribal poverty is mainly due to their traditional occupational practiced which results in low level of income and savings. For all the Indian tribes, agriculture forms the basic principle of livelihood. They practice mainly shifting cultivation in the hills, settle cultivation in the plains and in some tribal areas they practiced horticulture and collection of minor forest product. Besides these, there are also some small tribes who earn their livelihood in rope making, animal trapping and birds catching, basket making and cattle-rearing. But such large dependence on their traditional agricultural activities does not help in improving their economy. The agricultural implements they used were crude primitive and no scope for scientific method of agriculture. Though, their work participation rate is higher than that of the other non tribal communities, there is less surplus over production. Due to low level of surplus over
production, the income generated from their traditional occupation is very low and they are economically depressed. In most of the cases, tribal cannot save due to low level of income from their traditional occupation.

2.5. Growth and Backwardness: State Intervention under Planning

State intervention is simply an action taken by the government for the economic development of the country. It is mainly an involvement of the government in an economic matter. In such countries, the government is responsible for making policies, programmes and allocation of development funds etc. The classical economics had a long negative list of government function. They want that, most of the things to be left for private enterprise. The first interventionist was by Prof. Pigou, who wanted that the government has to ensure the national dividend or national income rises because its components has greater relevance to the poor (Shrivastava, 1996, p.44). He wanted equitable distribution of national dividend and harmonious growth process. He says that, economic growth has to remove the sordidness of the mean streets and the criterion of development should not be profit maximisation but welfare maximisation. So, the government has an important role to play in all those fields where social marginal returns are higher than the private marginal returns.

In a developed country like United States of America, England, Australia, a policy of laissez-faire have been follow (no government intervention) because they have no unemployment problem. Their income, savings and literacy rate is high enough and they have high human development index. They can survive without government intervention in the decision making. If the same thing is followed in developing countries like India, many poor people especially tribal will be the most sufferers and it will result in social injustice. Keeping in mind the demerits of free market economy (laissez-fair) after independence, India has been actively thinking for the uplift of the tribal people. Accordingly, the constitution of India empowered the responsibility of state to promote the educational and economic interest of schedule tribes and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Singh,
Our beloved leader, late Jawaharlal Nehru, sought that the tribes to develop along with lines of their own genius. Addressing on all India conference of the tribal held at Jagdalpur of Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh in March 1955, he said that

“Whenever you live, you live in your own way. We want that your customs should survive and at the same time we want that you should be educated and should do your part in the welfare of our country” (Singh, 2006, p. 4).

Jawaharlal Nehru was not against the modernization of tribes but he wanted that the process should be gradual. In 1960 he wrote that,

“Political and economic forces impinged upon them and it was not possible or desirable to isolate them. Equally undesirable, it seems to me, was to allow these forces to function freely and upset their whole life and culture, which had so much good in them” (Raha, 1998, pp.123-24).

In foreword to the second edition of Elwin’s book, A Philosophy for NEFA in 1989, Nehru spelt out his “Panch Sheel” or five cardinal principles concerning the Government’s attitude towards the tribal in order to prevent the loss of identity and culture, and also for their development:

i) People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

ii) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.

iii) We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, are needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

iv) We should not over administer these areas or overwhelm them with multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to their social and cultural institutions.

v) We should judge results, not by statistics of the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is involved.
Nehru was totally against the assimilation of tribal with the mainstream of Indian culture. He felt that this would have disastrous effects on the tribal of northeast India who would ultimately lose their own culture and tradition and would put an end of their arts and craft, dance and music and their ways of living (Raha, 1998, p.125). Elwin also expressed Nehru views: “We may well succeed in uprooting them from their way of life with its standards and disciplines and give them nothing in its place.” (Elwin, 1960, p.54) Verrier Elwin was against making the tribal of Northeast India “a second rate copy” of the mainland Indians. He felt that two extreme courses should be avoided: one was to treat them as anthropological specimens for study and the other was to allow them to be engulfed by the masses of Indian humanity. In short, there has been recognition of specific tribal and ethnic identities through the policies of the state, but such a policy was not complemented with adequate support of capability building in the region (Ahmed and Prasenjit, 2004, p.3). The Nehru policy of leaving them alone did not ensure appropriate self-development.

The relative isolation of the tribal has been considered as one of the problem of nation-building. The attitude of the new Indian political leadership has been same as the early colonial mind, that of an amused bewilderment - that of seeing something so exotic and so far so remote. In view of the fact that tribal socio-economic structures, culture and value systems, ways of life are totally different from that of the non-tribal complex societies, any attempt toward forced assimilation may be counterproductive in the long run — the policy of integration instead of assimilation got world-over recognition from both the academic as well as administrative circles (Das, 1995, p.76). Independent India also adopted this integrationist approach towards tribal minorities. Assimilation is the loss of ethnic attributes of minorities as a result of interaction and its absorption into the dominant group would lead to “antagonism, tension and increasing alienation of each from the other.” (Rao, 1976, p.546) Integration calls for political, economic and administrative integration within the framework of cultural plurality where minorities can join the majorities without losing their linguistic, religious and cultural identity.
The policies of the Government of India towards the Northeastern region have changed remarkably over the years. The first one and a half decade of India’s policy towards the Northeastern region can be described as “Nehru policy framework” or “Nehru-Elwin policy” where quick administrative expansion associated with the revivalist-protectionist approach towards tribal development in the hill areas was followed. To quote Rustomji (1983, p.3)

“The Government of India’s policy vis-à-vis the tribal people of the frontiers have been humane and sympathetic.”

Since the early 1950s Jawaharlal Nehru had realized the necessity of a tribal policy to go beyond the political integration of the northeastern people with the rest of India. Verrier Elwin took an active part in the process of formulation of Indian tribal policy. He can be traced as a social philosopher and policy maker on the tribal affairs of northeast India. For Elwin “it was not the question of reviving anything, it is more a problem of introducing change without being destructive of the best values of old life” in northeast India (Elwin, 1988, p.295).

The Nehru-Elwin policy, which was followed during the first one and a half decade since independence, came under sharp criticism. There was a wide recognition that administrative penetration into the hilly areas of the northeastern states was minimal or not satisfactory (Hoakit, 2010). The revivalist-protectionist approach was dominated by an isolationist insinuation and drives a wedge between the tribal and non-tribal as well as hills and plains. The policy began to change since 1963 and largely abandoned subsequently after the death of both the proponents - Nehru and Elwin, in 1964. All developmental efforts by the government were guided by this security related approach. To tighten its grip of control even the remote corner of the northeast, the government of India created more administrative machineries. Hence, there was some short of administrative and political development in the region. However, this political and administrative development was not accompanied by corresponding economic development of the region. Rather, things appear to be more muddled than before. Schemes after schemes have been conceived and implemented. Most of them have failed. In most of the cases, the tribal life has worsened (Singh, 2004). Accordingly, many researchers have conducted research on
the state intervention on tribal growth and development administration under planning process due to their backwardness. Some of the studies of state intervention on tribal planning which highlights their economic backwardness are reviewed. For instance,

Goswami (1984) in his article “Tribal Development with special reference to North-East India” describes the strategy for tribal development with special reference to the tribes in northeast India. The strategy for tribal development, the author argues that it requires clear definition of terms of the contents of development for tribal which are bound to be different from the national contents. Tribal’s livings in the hills with some minor exception are not yet integrated into national economy and their contact with the economy has been minimal. He views that attempts to extend the national economy to their communities in haste are likely to be counter-productive for development, besides, setting in motion waves of social unrest. He also says that, the emergent tribal identity of the recent trend towards re-tribalization can be attributed to a large extent to their sudden exposure to the national economic forces. Economic development for the tribal’s and also for the northeastern region would mean a persistent rise in per capita income in real terms enumerating from increased domestic factor without accentuating economic disparities. This must be achieved while minimizing the adverse effects on future resource availability and on ecology without jeopardizing ethnic identity. Development, whether tribal or otherwise, is a value-loaded term as it signifies a progress in different spheres of individual and social life. Lopsided progress in one sphere is often at the expense of progress in another.

Roy Burman (1984) in his published book entitle “Towards Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nagaland and Manipur”. presents certain issues to be considered at the operational level for an integrated approach to tribal development during the Seventh Plan such as issues concerning the implementation of protective measures envisaged in the Tribal Sub-Plan, appropriate methodology for estimating the number of tribal families above the poverty line, strategies for bringing about inter-articulation of the felt needs of the tribal’s, the issues of grant-in-aid under Article 275 of the Constitution, the success and failure of tribal resettlement colonies and
related matters. The author comments that planning for tribal’s and tribal areas has become almost a gamble in ignorance. A massive programme of inter-communication among planning and implementation agencies, academics of different discipline interested in tribals and spokesmen of the various tribal forums is needed to correct the situation within the short time at disposal before the Seventh Plan.

Nayar (1985) in his article “Tribal Sub-Plan of Kerala: A Critical Appraisal”, shows that plan for tribal improvement since independence has not yielded adequate returns. The main reason for this, the author observes is that the government has approached tribal problem as though it is a homogenous one. The author argues that there are two levels at which the new strategy of Tribal Sub-Plan needs to be re-oriented. One is at the level of planning programmes for tribal development and the other is at the implementation stage. Before planning any programme, it is necessary and expedient to know the opinion of the beneficiaries about the programme. Most of the tribal development programmes are planned on the assumption that any programme intended to improve the welfare of a person or category of persons will be voluntarily and spontaneously accepted by the beneficiaries. The second requirement put forward for the success of the Tribal Sub-Plan is the strengthening of the machinery for administrative of programmes. More deep rooted change will have to be brought in the orientation and outlook of the staff towards their new assignments. The author suggests for a case work approach. The caseworker can train the tribal’s to new ideas and skills equip them for availing the existing programmes, motivate them to make proper use of them and convert them to modern ways of life. The method can be most effective in areas of tribal concentration where casework approach can be supplemented with group approach.

Prasad (1988) in his paper “Tribal Development Administration in India” examines the tribal development problem in a global context. He argues that the policy, programmes and constitutional provisions in India regarding tribal development are unmatchable when compared with other countries. The author gives a clear narration of the tribal development policies and programmes adopted during the pre and post independent eras. He is of the view that an attempt has been made to adopt participation as an instrument for rooting out rural and tribal poverty. The
administration in tribal areas will have to be flexible in view of the tribal culture, ecology and ethos of each tribal group and this will largely depend upon the attitude of civil servants. On the contrary, he opines that the administrators in India are not aware of the ethos of tribal people.

Mohanty (1990), in his article “Tribal Society Programme and Economic Change”, studies the dynamic of economic change in the tribal society of Keonjhar district of Orissa. According to Mohanty, the economy of Keonjhar district is rural in character and about 88.67 percent of the populations lived in rural areas. The economy of the district was dominated by primitive structure of production and the major segment of the rural population (58 percent) belongs to the backward classes. More than 90 percent of the villages are small which account for more than 71 percent of rural population of the district. Most of the villages are isolated due to topographical constraints; they present a scenario of close economics. The economy was further characterized by subsistence production. Lack of minimum thresholds population in those villages contributes towards their failure in sustaining infrastructure and other facilities. The dependency ratio of the tribal areas of the district was 1:2:49 which is higher than that of the district as a whole that is 1:2:07 and still higher than that of the state as a whole, that is 1:2:04. The higher dependency ratio in the tribal areas of the district was a major drag of the economics status of the household. The functional basis which breeds and perpetuates poverty among the people of the district had remained unchanged in spite of development efforts undertaken so far in the district. With the lunching of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in the region, there has been a significant growth of public investment. During the sixth five year plan about 43 percent of the state plan outlays were utilized for investment in the Tribal Sub-Plan areas of Orissa. However, the increased in public investment have not much improved their economy. Instead, the non-tribals residing in the Tribal Sub-Plan areas tend to benefit with the increased in public investment.

On the basis of the above findings, the author suggest strategy for tribal development like strengthening the existing transport facilities for ensuring greater access of the people to the marketing centers, setting up dependable marketing institution, promoting credit institutions so as to replace money lenders, providing an alternative source of energy like bio-gas, farm forestry so as to release tribals from
fuel collection and make them available for other productive purpose, education expansion should be made complementary to the expansion of productive opportunities. The poor economic base was the cause of poor health, so health planning programmes like safe drinking water, family welfare are to be provided to the tribals. He further suggested encouragement of animal’s husbandry and poultry farms for their subsidiary occupation.

Inamyongdang (1990) in his book “Rural Development in Nagaland: A Spatial Analysis” studies the level of rural development in Nagaland where majority of the people belongs to the tribal communities. To examine the rural development, the author conducted field work and collect data both from primary and secondary sources. First he selected 21 blocks and then he divided these blocks into relatively developed, marginally developed and least developed category. In this way, the author founds that, Nagaland was lagging far behind the nation in almost all the socio-economic aspects. The mainstay of the economy of Nagaland is agriculture, but majority of the tribal communities have continued in the primitive shifting cultivation stage of economy till today. According to Imnayongdang, effective planning for the purpose of development started only from the beginning of the fourth plan. The measure undertaken has brought some amount of development and the average per capita income increased from rupees.500.00 in 1970-71 to rupees.1777.00 in 1982-83. The percentage growth rate of the state net domestic product also shows an increased. Various affords have been made by the government to developed the resources and the economy of the state in all spheres. Rural development has taken up with integrated rural development programme, special livestock production programme, national rural employment programme, rural housing scheme, special rural road development etc. Further the author identified some areas as ‘backward’ and a special effort has been made by the government to develop them. However, one important feature of development is that funds necessarily come from the central government rather than the state government. To understand the actual state of development the author personally surveyed seven villages taking one from each district of the state and he found that some amount of development had occurred in almost all the village especially in respect of transport and communication, education, medical service etc. Although, measures for water
and power supply have been adopted, these are yet to be effectively provided. Thus, the author hopes that development in respect of social welfare has made headway.

Verma (1996) in his book “Tribal Development in India: Programmes and Perspectives” studies the documentation programmes and schemes envisaged and implemented from time to time for the development of Schedule tribes in Utter Pradesh. The main aim of the study is to document the various programmes and schemes envisaged and being implemented by the central as well as the state government for the improvement of the schedule tribes in Utter Pradesh. For this study, he collected books, journals, seminar papers, (Tribal Sub-Plan) reports, annual documents and office files etc. Besides these, the author made discussion with the officials and subordinate personal involved in the implementations of the schemes and programmes and he also visit tribal villages in order to get a clear picture of the prevailing situation. According to Verma, the tribal areas present a considerable degree of environmental and ethnic diversity. Tribal communities differ in their socio-economic levels, educational attainments and cultural milieus. These groups have remain socially, economically and educationally backward, and since the very beginning of the planning era, concerted efforts have been made to ameliorate their conditions and raise their social, economic and educational status. The problem of tribal development have long baffled the policy makers, administrators and social scientist in India, because the problem of hunger, starvation, poor shelter and exploitation faced by almost all the tribal groups of this countries are crying for solution. The British colonial rulers adopted the policy of isolating tribes with the slogan of ‘leave them alone’ which encouraged vested interest, namely, zaminders, landlords, forest contractors and money lenders to exploit and usurp the tribal land and forest on which their economy was based. This policy of ‘neglect’ accompanied by encroachments on the tribal rights in their land and forest led to the collapse of tribal economy, causing them utter and penury and misery.

He reported that, after independence, the policy of ‘isolation’ was replaced by the policy of ‘integration and assimilation’ when it was resolved that the new democratic state had a responsibility for the welfare of the tribal people and the development of tribal areas. India being a ‘welfare state’ wedded to the idea of democratic socialism aims at providing a minimum desirable standard of living to every citizen without
any sort of discrimination. To fulfill this objective, the whole process is directed towards supporting the underprivileged sections of society, who have been suffered from humiliation, exploitation and miserable poverty for more than a century. The whole planning process aims at achieving the redistribution of national resources with a view to bring maximum social justice in the society. This process involved protection of interests of the weaker and vulnerable section like schedule caste and schedule tribe and other backward classes of our society.

To achieve this goal, various anti-exploitative and protective measures have been taken, but the vulnerable conditions of any community cannot be improved without taking some positive steps to overcome their helplessness caused by their socio-economic backwardness. Keeping this objective in view, various legislative and welfare measures have been undertaken by the state to uplift these communities. According to the author, the state of Utter Pradesh has a negligible number of schedule tribes, in spite of their small numbers; their study is a matter of some importance because the government has implemented a number of welfare schemes for their advancement. Despite considerable amount of investment in the tribal areas, the experience during the last Five Year Plans brings out certain constrains with regard to the pattern and efficiency of the delivery system. Out of the state’s share of fund, larger outlays has gone into the creation of infrastructural facilities, and a very small proportion of the total investment has been made for the beneficiary-oriented schemes, but it does not benefitted to the tribal. The administrative machinery in the tribal areas has come under severe criticism due to the complex pattern and multiplicity of administrative agencies supervising the implementing the beneficiary-oriented schemes. The project officer of the tribal development schemes has serious limitation of resources as well as they are generally not consulted with regard to rural development programmes being executed in the area. There was a considerable of lag in the delegation of financial and administrative powers to the project officers in keeping with the responsibilities assigned. The inter-departmental co-ordination, which is necessary for achieving integration of sectoral programmes in those areas are absent. The programme officer who appears to be the central figure for implementing the tribal development programmes in his area is actually helpless with regard to the technical departments who are executing the schemes. The ultimate result of such defective planning and loopholes in the implementation of
machinery has been that the investment done through various tribal welfare schemes could not percolate to the intended beneficiaries in its entirety. Consequently, not much change could be introduced in tribal areas, which was essentially the ultimate goal of all these schemes and programmes.

Sanjenbam (1998) in his book, “Manipur: Geography and Regional Development”, has pointed out that in Manipur the implementation of economic development programmes is not evenly carried out throughout the state which has led to disparity between different regions and sections of the society, besides decline in employment in traditional crafts and industries. She points out that in the tribal areas there is still prevalence of shifting agricultural economy marked by absence of industries and low urbanization. She further points out that the hill districts of Manipur present a scene of poverty, unemployment, economic exploitation, social deprivation, poor health, illiteracy and lack of infrastructure. According to her, it is difficult to think of the balanced development of the state without improving the lot of tribal people living in the hill districts.

Mohanty (2000) in his article entitled “Development of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes in Independence India : Leads and Lags” studies the implementations of the plans outlays for schedule castes and schedule tribe during the five year plans to examine that those tribal people who are really benefited or not. According to him, protective measures have been taken for the welfare of schedule tribe’s like’s forest, shifting cultivation, bonded labor, rehabilitation of displacement families, land alienation, excise policy etc so as to ensure social, economic and political justice, so that the tribal’s should engaged in nation-building and for shaping the socio-economic development of the people. The building bricks of the nation, that is, the different constituents like religious, linguistic, ethnic communities have not been commented together adequately into a strong edifice. In this context, it is well to remember that, about one-fourth of the total population of the country comprising of schedule caste and schedule tribe have been kept at the society’s margin. The percentage of schedule tribe and schedule caste population below poverty line is much larger than the rest of the society. The forest villages deep inside the forest areas have remained deprived of the benefits of the development.
According to Mohanty, a special programmed of an integrated character to be implemented either by the forest department itself or intimate collaboration of concerned department agencies/department for the overall development of the people in the forest villages without any disturbing the growth and conservation of forest. The Ministry of Agriculture had launched a central sponsored scheme to control shifting cultivation. A comprehensive review of the shifting cultivation should be made and a time-bound programmed drawn up. Bonded laborers should be identified systematically and hand over this task to reputed voluntary organization.

There is a need to review all the existing land alienation legislation to plug loopholes, strict enforcement of the provision for violations, provisions for inputs for land development and other modern agricultural practiced and review the old cases of alienation and restoration of alienated land to tribals. At present there is no proper monitoring and evaluation of schedule caste and schedule tribe programmes. As a result, implementation is very poor and development benefits do not percolate to the members of target groups. Effective machinery should be set up to monitor the programmes in their implementation and evaluate the programmes and effect mid-term corrections. The centre and state may consider carefully at what levels this machinery should be function.

Mohanty reported that, the percentage of schedule caste and schedule tribe people below poverty line is much larger than that of the rest of the society. He collected data from National Sample Survey Organization for the year 1977-78 and 1987-88 to estimate the percentage of schedule caste and schedule tribe and all population below poverty line, the estimates show that there has been a significant reduction in the incidence of poverty since 1977-78 among all sections of the society including schedule castes and schedule tribes. However, the author shows that about 29.9 percent of people are still living below poverty line and he feels that, it is a matter of serious concern. He also observed from the estimates he made that the ratio of poor people is highest among the schedule tribes followed by schedule castes and other section of the society. With the introduction of the two special plans, that is, the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) for schedule tribes and the Special Component Plan (SCP) for the schedule castes, financial investment for schedule castes and schedule tribes received a major fillip of funds during the plans period. The outlays for schedule
Tribes ranged between 0.5 percent to 1 percent of the total plan outlays up to the Fourth Plan period, there has been a marked hiatus since the fifth plan onwards when the outlays has been 3 percent or more. Similarly, in the case of schedule castes, outlays on their development varied from about 0.35 percent to 0.52 percent during the first and fifth plans, they shot up to 3.41 percent in the sixth plan and 4.02 percent in the seventh plan. Undisputedly, the two special plans have been responsible for raising the earlier depressingly low level of investment for the two schedule communities. Against this background, the author suggested some strategies for the development and improvement of the tribal.

The Special Component Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan have not been faithfully implemented by the various central ministers/ departments which is evident from the fact that under Tribal Sub-Plan only a few out of 67 central ministries / departments have quantified funds. Thus, instead of existing sectoral allocation under Special Component Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan should be converted into a separate budget head in the central budget and state budget, adequate arrangements has to be made by central and state to monitor the earmarking and utilization of funds under these heads. He further reported that, the condition of women among schedule caste/schedule tribe is far lower than that of their counterpart. Hence, woman component in the strategy of the Special Component Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan may be introduced. A good number of tribal families are living in the forest villages. The forest villages deep inside the forest areas have remained deprived of the benefits of development. Since, it might not be possible to convert all the forest villages into revenue villages so to ensure implementation of the appropriate development programmes for the welfare of the people in these forest villages. In this connection, the author suggested that the forest department should implement special programmes for the tribal’s in an integrated manner without disturbing the growth and conservation of forest. Further, Mohanty estimated that, over six lacks tribal families in 16 states practiced shifting cultivation effecting 10 million hectares of forest land and he suggested few points to reduced the practiced of shifting cultivation. They are: a) weaning shifting cultivation towards settled cultivation; b) reduces effects of shifting cultivation on ecology and environment; c) suggest appropriate agricultural/horticultural practices to ensure food for the people throughout the year on a priority basis and diversified the
occupational structure of the shifting cultivator’s families. To him, effect/impact of this programme has to be ascertained.

The most important resource base of the tribal peoples, namely, land has been passing into the hands of the non-tribal notwithstanding acts and regulation to control alienation of tribal lands. The erosion of resource base of the tribal through exploitative must be put to an end too. Towards achieving this objective, he suggested that, i) review of all existing land alienation legislation to plug loopholes; ii) strict enforcement of the provisions for violation; iii) provision for inputs for land development and other modern agricultural practices and iv) review of old cases of alienation and restoration of alienated land to tribals. After 50 years of independence, a large number of populations do not have access to basic service like drinking water, education, health, housing, road connection and sanitation. According to him, these services are lacking more among schedule caste and schedule tribes. So, he suggested the commission to monitor and evaluate the status of these sectors for weaker sections.

Komaraiah (2002) in his article “Economic Liberalization and its Impact on Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes in India” studies the impact of liberalization on schedule castes and schedule tribes in India in general. According to him, the government has been a major stakeholder in business and has played a dominant role in the economy to ensure social justice and self reliance while achieving economic growth. At the same time, the Indian constitution provides safeguards for the schedule castes and schedule tribes with an objective of securing socio-economic, political and education justice. The main safeguards are abolition of untouchability, protection from injustice, exploitation by others, removal of restriction on access to shops, restaurants, wells, tanks, roads, to acquire property, giving admission in educational institution, job reservation in different cadres of service, representation in assemblies and parliament, setting up a separate department, advisory councils and removal of bonded labor. But, after 1990 the government introduced the New Economic Reforms (NERs) to overcome the crisis of external and internal debts based on the guidance from International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The new economic reforms put emphasized on specific sectors like International Trade,
Public and Private, Finance and Agriculture. Initially, India began with the devaluation of rupee along with measures to reduce fiscal deficit. Subsequently a number of structural reforms have been introduced as a part of on-going programmes. It may be argued that, after economic liberalization a massive investment in industrial sector will be more benefited to all sections of the society. But, due to mechanization of industrial sectors and low labor absorbing capacity, the rise in investment is not commensurate with the rise in investment. The high-skilled educated persons have more chances to get employment in the industrial sector.

The economic liberalization makes public sector threats to closure and the employment opportunities for weaker section get reduced. Therefore, member of schedule caste and schedule tribes without much education and technical skills are not benefited by the liberalization process. The study show that the absolute number of schedule castes and schedule tribes employment in government jobs had gone down. The schedule caste employment had gone down from 6.28 lacks in 1991 to 6.04 lacks in 1992. However in case of schedule tribe, the study show unemployment was increased from 1.56 lakhs in 1991 to 2.02 in 1992. With regard to employment in public sector undertakings, it was found that the absolute number of schedule caste employees in public sector undertakings had declined from 4.32 lakhs in 1990 to 3.69 lakhs in 1992. Similarly the number of schedule tribe employees has gone down from 2.2 lakhs in 1990 to 1.62 lakhs in 1992. Their percentage share was declined from 19.54 percent in 1990 to 17.74 percent for schedule caste and from 9.93 percent in 1990 to 7.77 percent in 1992 for schedule tribe. The prominent declined was in ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ grade jobs. Further Komaraiah reported that, the vulnerability of the weaker sections specially schedule castes and schedule tribe suffers from poverty, other evils and insecurity due to job-less growth in the economy after liberalization.

Singh (2004), in his article “Tribal Development in India: What Went Wrong?” studies the developmental problem of tribal in different parts of the country. According to him, the development of the tribal population in India has been a major concern of the government, voluntary agencies, non government organisation, social reformers, social scientists etc. But even after five decades of independence we are no nearer to the solution of the problem. Rather, things appear to be more muddled.
than before. Schemes after schemes have been conceived and implemented. Most of them have failed. In most of the cases, tribal life has worsened. No policy paper exists on this important subject, though millions of rupees have already been spent in the name of tribal development. But development has not brought contentment in its wake. In fact, the tribal have become more miserable as they have “developed”. They have been displaced from their traditional homes and their lands acquired for the construction of industries, roadways, railways, large dams, power stations, mines etc. The effort to provide education on the basis of common curriculum is the worst culprit. They have acquired “knowledge” which is entirely useless in their life. The “educated” tribal’s are misfits in their societies. They are also unfit in the non-tribal society. They are left in the lurch after “education.” They are subject to similar high expectations and lower economic capabilities as the common middle-class in the country. According to Singh, the biggest mistake in the tribal development planning in India has been the clubbing together of all tribes though they constitute a homogenous cultural group. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The schedule tribes exhibit a whole spectrum of human and cultural evolution – from hunter-gatherer-fisher (foragers) through shifting cultivation, pastoralist, marginal farming, to agriculture based on irrigation. It is naive to think that they all have similar problems or similar development or welfare schemes will be useful to them all equally. In order to make a viable tribal development programme, he suggest reclassify the Indian tribes and programmes/schemes should be prepared for each of the class separately and to integrate tribal economy with the rest of the economy.

Catherine (2009), in her article “Tribal Development in India with Special Reference to Manipur: Trajectory and Literature” study the tribal development of Manipur state and the failure of the five years plan in the improvement of the tribal. According to her, the union as well as the state governments has invested a large amount of money in various five year plans to uplift the socio-economic status of the tribals. During the First and Second Five Year Plans, but there was no separate allocations for tribal development and during this period Emphasis was on development of transport and communication, and social and community services. During the Third Five Year Plan, rupees1.2 crores was earmarked for the welfare of the backward classes particularly the schedule tribes. In the Fourth Plan, emphasis was on improvement and better health, education and economic development. The
major programme for the development of backward classes has been mainly through the centrally sponsored sector. In the state plan, the schemes for economic development of tribes included aid to individual cultivator for purchasing of agricultural implements, setting up of village industries and handicrafts. Under agricultural programmes, there are three out of nine programmes were intended to help the Schedule Tribes. These programmes included minor irrigation, soil conservation and forests. An important development during this plan was an emphasis on increasing use of high yielding variety (HYV) seeds for paddy, wheat and maize which are made available to cultivators besides other inputs. The Fifth Five Year Plan of the state aimed at securing, inter alia, the twin national objectives of removal of poverty and attainment of economic self-reliance. The main emphasis was on irrigation, transport and communication. During the Sixth Five Year plan, social and community services, water and power took major share. The plan was very ambitious with a huge outlay of rupees 246 crores. According to the author, the Seventh Five-Year Plan strategy for development consisted of acceleration in the productive sectors with sustained efforts to improve development of agriculture and allied activities. The basic objective of the Eighth Five Year Plan was to accelerate the socio-economic development of the tribal people. Main emphasis of this plan was on irrigation and power, and social and community services. In addition to the expenditure from the state plan, there was also the special assistance to the Tribal Sub-Plan areas for the Eighth Five Year Plan period in which emphasis was given for the improvement of education sector, agriculture and allied services. In the Ninth Five Year Plan, strategy adopted was creation of amenities through infrastructure development schemes, poverty alleviation through family-oriented income generating schemes and improvement of tribal talent through the implementation of research-oriented schemes/programmes. She reported that, various efforts have been made during the plan period for the development of tribal. Important problems such as poverty, lack of roads and communication facilities, shortage of drinking water, irrigation, education, culture, health and housing has been taken up. The Tribal Sub-Plan initiated in the Fifth Five Year Plan gives importance on the one hand to the elimination of exploitation of schedule tribes, especially in the fields of land alienation, money lending, forestry etc., and on the other hand, to the development of population and the area through plan schemes. So the basic objective is to speed up the process of social and economic development to build up the inner strength of the
tribal people and to improve their organizational capabilities. Despite all such efforts and massive input, the results have fall short of expectation. In Manipur, in most of the Five-Year Plan periods there has been an increase in the fund allotment for the tribal areas and it has gone up to 45.17 percent and 42.15 percent of the state’s plan outlay in the Eighth and Ninth Plan periods respectively. Therefore, it may be stated, that the central as well as the state governments have been allocating more and more funds for the improvement of this backward section of the society. But Tribal Development Blocks have brought about some changes but the overall impact was not significant.

Xaxa (2011), in his paper, “Tribes and Social Exclusion” studies the intervention of state under tribal plans. According to him, a lot of provisions have been made for the protection and welfare of the tribal. In correspondence to these provisions policies and programmes have been worked out for the tribal people. Prominent among them are affirmative action programmes, on which core of rupees have been spent by the government since independence. The rest of the population looks tribal’s as one who depend solely on the state patronage. On a close introspection, it is far from true. According to the author, justification of development projects that have been destined to displace millions from their homes and sources of livelihood have been made on the ground that the projects are going to be of immense benefit to the country or region or locality. The generation of power, extension of irrigation facilities and opportunities for employment, development of infrastructure etc. is some of the things that are invoked in support of such projects. There is hardly any doubt that such projects of development do bring about development and contribute to economic growth. The irony is that the benefits of such developments have hardly accrued to people, who have made possible these projects by their sacrifice. In Jharkhand by 1996, for example, 8 major and 55 medium hydraulic projects along with many more minor projects had come up. But these had displaced a large number of households. He reported that, irrigation in Jharkhand constituted only about 7.68 percent of the net sown area and households electrified was mere 9.04 percent. As large as 201 large and medium scale industries have come up in Jharkhand, displacing a large number of families on the one hand and providing employment to lakhs of people on the other. Yet the benefits of these development projects do not go to tribal people of Jharkhand or to the displaced tribal. This can be
vividly illustrated by citing the case of coal mine industries. In between 1981 to 1985, the industry had displaced 32,750 families but had provided job to only 11,901 heads of households. The gravity of this situation is compounded by the fact, the displaced until very recent years were hardly thought in terms of rehabilitation. They were summarily dismissed by cash compensation. Yet even here the state has been found 15 faltering in its responsibility. He found out in 1988 that after 30 years of filling in of Hirakund reservoir, the compensation amounting to 15 crores of rupees was due for payment to 9,913 claimants who had lost their land. In the case of Machkund Hydroelectric project even when they have been rehabilitated, benefits of the project in general had hardly accrued to the displaced. In terms of irrigation, electric power, tourism, piscine culture and other schemes for economic development, the government, for example, justified the Upper Kolab project. However, rehabilitated displaced had none of these benefits. In the process of the development of these projects, a large number of tribal people have been displaced from their land and other sources of livelihood. Neither they have been given adequate compensation nor have they been provided proper rehabilitation. The result is the gap between tribes and the rest of population in respect of fruits of development. There is no doubt that there has been increase in literacy rate, decrease in the size of people below poverty line, decrease in school drop outs rate etc. Yet the gap between tribes and general population is widening. Since the affirmative action programmes address in especially manner the problems of the disadvantage, the least it could be expected from the programme is to bridge the gap that has been existing. Yet efforts in direction have not borne the result. Either the gap remains at where it had been or it had even been widened. Tribal problem has primarily been couched in terms of social and economic backwardness arising from their geographical and social isolation. Hence the whole discourse on tribes has been around the question of integration through extension of civil, political and social rights. Yet economic rights which tribes enjoyed and which was their critical asset has been usurped by the state in exchange of the above mentioned rights. In fact, the extension of civil, political and kind of social rights has become the arena of legitimizing the expropriation of resources of the tribal people. Hence there have been terms of exchange between the state and tribal’s in India, an exchange that has been steeped in expropriation, domination and discrimination.
All the above literatures review on growth and development together reveals that the tribals are backward due to the wrong intervention of government under the tribal planning process. The main reason of their economic backwardness is that the government has approached tribal as a homogeneous group. The development programmes, policy and constitutional provisions of the tribal in India are unmatchable with them, which increased backwardness and poverty among different sections of the tribals. Because, tribals have different problems and their problems are vary from region to regions. They have different socio-economic levels, educational attainments and cultural milieus. In most of the planning process, the government implemented tribal development programmes treating them as homogeneous. So the tribal cannot achieved maximum socio-economic justice in the society and kept the tribal in a society margin. In order to make a viable tribal development programmes in our country, most of the authors suggest that the government should prepared development programmes and schemes for each of the class separately according to the needs of the people and to allot more fund for development.

2.6. Remarks

Tribal backwardness has also been studied in terms of underdevelopment of land and forest. Tribal backwardness occurs due to the practice of traditional occupation which results in low level of income and savings, tribal backwardness in terms of state intervention under the planning process. Tribal are alienated from their land due to the introduction of government projects like dams, canals and construction of industry which kept the tribal landless and marginal land holdings. It makes tribal in a minimum production and forced the tribal to depend on forest product which result in mass poverty and backwardness.

The literature also reveals that tribal backwardness and poverty is due to the practiced of traditional occupation called shifting cultivation (Jhum/podu). It is a labor intensive which requires more labor and the return is less. In a traditional shifting cultivation, the father, mother even the children’s are also engaged. The
Hmar people are also not free from these defects. Since the return is less from the traditional occupation, their income is not sufficient for savings and most of the tribal in India are in the debt trap. Because of mass poverty and backwardness prevail among the tribal, the literature survey also reveals that the government is engaged in making various policy and programme for the improvement of the tribal, but various studies shows that the government policy are failed on this matter. The governments treat tribes as homogeneous group, but there are large numbers of tribal even in our country. Their problems are different from region to regions and community to community. But the government prepared policies treating them as homogeneous group. So our research is an attempt to fill the gap of previous studies by studying the particular Hmar tribe of South-Assam.

On Hmar there is very little literature. On other tribe, there are however sufficient amount of literature. These literature point out that the tribe are characterized by low per capita income, low savings, underutilized or unutilized man power, predominance of agriculture, technological backwardness, poor health, many modes of production and unfavorable institutional set up. Most of the characteristic we find in general theories are prevail in tribal economy. Because, tribal are poor, and they practice traditional type of agriculture’s called shifting cultivation. At the same time they combined various occupations like collection of roots, wet lands cultivation, horticulture, fishing, hunting etc. and low level of income and savings are the main features of tribal community.
Chapter – 3

Concepts, Methodology and Analysis Design
This chapter describes and elaborates the methodology of the present study. Principal concepts used to analyze the data and statistical techniques used to interpret the quantitative information are also elaborated here. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the conceptual framework, according to which we put forward the empirical analysis of Hmar tribe in chapter four, five and six. The second section describes the methods of data collection, period of field survey and the reference period of analysis; the limitations of data collection are also highlighted. The sampling design is also elaborated. The third section describes the framework of tools and statistical techniques which have been used for empirical analysis of data and information in succeeding chapters. A short note on regression analysis is also enclosed.

3.1. A Framework of Concepts

Backwardness of Hmar is manifested in shifting cultivation, low income and savings, indebtedness and lack of entrepreneurship. These are economic manifestation of under development. In Hmar settlement, backwardness is also to be conceived in poor housing condition, low literacy, high mortality and uneconomic family size, and these are non-economic dimension of backwardness in our thesis. In our framework of empirical analysis in chapter four, five and six, we have principally used the concepts related with terminologies of backwardness, income, savings, economic factors, non-economic factors, shifting cultivation, land holdings, traditional economy and local market. It is interesting to go through the relations and interrelations among the concepts on which our thesis relies to advance the empirical analysis. We have considered in our thesis backwardness as an outcome of both economic factors as well as non-economic factors.

The concept and meaning of backwardness and underdevelopment are interchangeable. Economic backwardness is a situation when income does not suffice to meet the basic needs. A country is backward if it is relatively more dependent on a ‘pre-modern’ agricultural sector than their neighbors, and it lacks a well-developed industrial sector with associated financing institutions that can
mobilize vast amounts of capital via markets (Gerschenkron, 1962). Economic backwardness is measured by income per capita, amount of social overhead capital, literacy, savings rates and level of technology. Since many of these are positively correlated, it is often proxies by income per capita. Generally, the absence of what Rostow called pre-requisites is an indication of economics backwardness. In common sense term, a ‘backward people’ may be defined as a group of people who are in some fashion or other unsuccessful in the economic struggle to earn their livelihood (Myint, 1954). In our thesis, we have used the concepts of income and livelihood to estimate Hmar backwardness.

It is not denied that backwardness has been conceived in very wide and comprehensive way in the literature. Harvey Leibenstein (1957) defines backwardness in terms of concepts of equilibrium and stability. According to Leibenstein (1957), economic backwardness is characterized by a set of related forces which have a certain degree of stability. The degree of stability is characterized by the fact that some of the crucial variables have equilibrium values that possess at least stability in small change though not necessarily perfect stability. The actual values are different from the equilibrium values because the economy is always being subjected to stimulants or shocks. The stimulants have a tendency to raise the per-capita income above the equilibrium level. But in backward economies, long-run economic development does not take place because the magnitude of the stimulants is too small. In other words, backward economies are caught in the grip of equilibrium forces which keep per capita income fluctuating narrowly around a subsistence level. The equilibrium system conceived by him is not a stationary but a quasi-equilibrium state in which some of the variables (e.g. capital, labor force) in the system can expand absolutely, but other variables, especially per capita income, possess a subsistence equilibrium value. He says that, the problem for backward economy is to transform its situation in such a way that it may escape from this equilibrium value.

In a backward economy, small increase in per capita income do not produce a sustained growth in per capita income because: (a) such increase tend to be ‘eaten up’ by peasants and others; (b) population increases follow a rise in income so there is no gain in per capita income; (c) certain investments take time to become
profitable; (d) investments in human beings (e.g. education) also takes time before they fructify into productive activities; (e) entrepreneurial activities which lead to increases in national income (positive-sum activities, e.g. productive investment) are not encouraged while the proclivity towards activities which do not yield increase in national income (zero-sum activities, e.g. buying and selling of real estate) is not discouraged; (f) resistance to old ideas, knowledge, behavior and incentives. It was not possible to study Hmar backwardness in the Leibenstein framework, which is very comprehensive. However, we have taken note of the factor called “entrepreneurial” activity in our work.

In our conceptual framework, we subscribe to the view that backwardness may be in the form of both economic and non-economic factors. Economic factors are those which directly influence the development. The growth rate of the economy rises or falls as a result of change in them. Such as occupation, income, savings and investment, consumption, capital accumulation, human resources, production, technological advancement, development planning (Lekhi 1996). But all this economic factors which determines economic backwardness cannot be applied in tribal economy. Because the tribal economy is very simple, they have limited economic resources. In course of this study, we will examine economic factors such as occupation, income and savings of the Hmar tribe which is treated as main determinants of economic backwardness based on primary data through regression analysis. We deal with economic factors in chapter four and five in the thesis.

Most of the general theories developed by earlier economists like Adam Smith, Marshall, and Hicks etc. neglect the non-economic aspects of economic development. It is only in recent times, some economists seek to examine economic factors along with social factors. Prof. Myrdal says, “Economic theory has disregarded so called non-economic factors and kept them outside the analysis. As they are among the main vehicles for the circular causation in the cumulative process of economic change, this represents one of the principal shortcomings of economic theory (Myrdal, 1958). The other eminent economists for example, Arthur Lewis (1955), Bauer and Yamey (1957), G. M. Meir (1970) also stress the importance of non-economic factors in economic development. According to Bauer and Yamey, “Economic development is the result of a combination of Social, Cultural, Political
and Economic changes which in turn brings about further change”. G. M. Meir says that,

“If development is growth plus change, and change is social and cultural as well as economic, and then the qualitative dimension of development becomes extremely significant in terms of human resource development. Without such change the process of development will not become self-sustaining.”

In case of tribal communities, this type of study is of special importance. In the tribal community, the basis assumption of pure economic theory like price mechanism, competition, exchange, mobility of the factors of production is generally absent. More normally, one will notice among them a mutual co-operation rather than competition in the area of economic activities. This co-operation is amply demonstrated in their activities relating to agriculture, hunting and other allied aspects (Goswami, 1995). We therefore confine ourselves to the only three non-economic factors of family, health and literacy in chapter-six in our thesis.

We have studied backwardness in terms of economic factors like income, savings, entrepreneurship and method of production and non-economic factors of family, health and literacy because structure of production relations among Hmar is monolithic in character. Hmar constitutes a single group without any categorization into different social classes. This is in sharp contrast with the non-tribal population. A Hmar household is simultaneously an enterprise, a worker unit as well as a producer and a consumer. A household combine many occupations at a time, though the way of customs and life remains primitive. The modernizations drives and developmental schemes of Assam government in particular and government of India in general could not break the features of primitiveness. In our study, we study the characteristic of households in great detail in chapter four.

Anthropologist Elman (1962) presented a system of classification for societies in all human cultures based on the evolution of social inequality and the role of the state. This system of classification contains four categories: gatherer-hunter bands, which are generally egalitarian; tribal societies in which there are some limited instances of social rank and prestige (see Chiefdom); stratified tribal societies led by chieftains;
and, civilizations, with complex social hierarchies and organized, institutional governments. Our Hmar tribe falls under second classification.

Fried (1975) in his study *The Notion of the Tribe* provided numerous examples of tribes, the members of which spoke different languages and practiced different rituals. They shared languages and rituals with members of other tribes. Similarly, he provided examples of tribes where people followed different political leaders, or followed the same leaders as members of other tribes. He concluded that tribes in general are characterized by fluid boundaries and heterogeneity, are not parochial, and are dynamic. This is more or less so in the case of Hmar in south Assam. Hmar tribe is a group of people in a south Assam having a clear linguistic and well defined political boundary. It is within the latter, the regular determinate ways of acting are imposed on its members. This tribe has also a well defined cultural boundary, but that is the general framework for the mores, the folkways, and the formal and informal interaction of these members. These characteristics are but slowly getting diluted. Some of these traits are gradually withering away as the Hmar tribe is in the process of absorption in the wider Assamese society. The Hmar tribes are engaged in different kinds of occupations to eke out their subsistence and combined hunting with domestication of animals in south Assam particularly in the villages of Saisel, Tupidhor, Ngain Ram than and Muoldam. The Hmar economy can be categorized as a hybrid mode of production in south Assam (refer to appendix - 2).

Their traditional economy stands for more or less absolute dependence on nature for food and collection of housing materials from jungle to meet the basic needs of day-to-day life. The pattern of occupation is agriculture and shifting cultivation is practiced in the hilly areas of Assam and settled cultivation on the plain areas. They collect medicine from local plants and herbs. Settled cultivation is practiced by the hill tribe of Hmar in the terraced land down the hill streams and in the high lands only to a limited extent. Settled cultivation is permanent cultivation, which does not require shifting the areas. It is a permanent cultivation, which includes cultivation of land, ploughing with two animals. This is but rarely practiced by the Hmar tribe. What is prevalent is the shifting cultivation commonly known as ‘Jhum’ cultivation. It is extensively practiced in a wide range of the hill slopes of south Assam. It is a “form of agriculture under which the cultivators clear part of the forest, sets fire to
the fallen trees and branches and sow seeds in the ashes. This method of cultivation leads to heavy erosion and fertility of soil and hence it is called a wasteful method. Though it is a primitive type of cultivation, it is an important type of cultivation for the hill tribes like the Hmar, Kuki, Riang, Khasi, etc. inhabited in different regions of south Assam.

Among the Hmar, land holdings are determined on the basis of ownership holdings, ownership being taken to mean transferable and heritable rights. The household residing in communal owned land without having individual land documents are not counted as land holdings in this study. They are treated as landless. But some of the Hmars household in different villages has their own land with proper documents and the size of land are categorized as marginal size, small, semi medium, medium and large size. Communal land is also called ‘Jhum Land Permission’ in South-Assam. In most of the tribal areas in South-Assam land is owned by the community as a whole. The government allotted land to the Village Headman for the community, and the village headman again distributed the land to its villagers for cultivation as well as for building their house. In this system of land, no individual can transfer their land to other persons nor can they sell their land to the others. The villagers have the right to only use the land. In most of the cases of land, the decision of the headman is final and all the documents of land are in the name of the village Headman.

Those who are shifting cultivators and agricultural labor also practice forest hunting. Forest hunting is a term which we shall use repeatedly in connection with the tribal occupations. Some tribal communities earn their livelihood through forest hunting. These includes collection of wild roots, fruits leaves, animals hunting etc. Honey collection in the jungles is also included under hunting. It is a subsidiary occupation followed by the Tribals mostly in the North-Eastern region. Like the other tribal, Hmar people practices forest hunting in the early days. But now only few peoples of Ngaibanramthar village, Muoldam and Saisel villages practiced forest hunting.

In this traditional system of agricultural economy of Hmar, there are local markets. Local market is an important term used with reference to the mode of transaction and exchange of goods and service among the tribal. The tribal have their own institution of barter called local markets. The weekly markets, fortnightly markets, bi-weekly
markets etc, come under local markets. In tribal areas, the local market plays an important role in the economic life of the people. It serves as a center for redistribution of resources and material goods of occupationally diverse communities in the region. In the local markets two kinds of commodities are normally transacted, the commodities which are primarily produced within the region and commodities brought from outside the region. Wherever Hmar lives, the local market plays an important to sell their agricultural product. Some of the Hmar people attend the daily market as well as bi-weekly market.

Among the Hmar tribes, the most important cause of poverty is subsistence production of inferior precuts and low level of demand for those product in the markets. In simple terms, literacy means a person who can read or write. But in economics, only a person who can read or write is nothing, if it is not used for earning purpose. So here literacy we mean not only a person who can read or write but also a person who has sufficient educational qualification for employment. Our thesis proceeds in the above-cited conceptual framework, which is of course a very limited and narrow framework. Such a design has been adopted because of lack of quantitative data in case of Hmar.

3.2. Methodology: Data Collection and Sampling Technique

In our thesis, research methodology refers to the way in which the research was conducted and the data of Hmar was collected. We have investigated a particular area of the dwellings of Hmar. Appropriate procedures and techniques have been used to perform the research on economic backwardness of tribe. We have explained the terminology and explanation of how these methods has been applied effectively. A format of research was prepared and used before the investigation began in the year 2007. We have conducted primary research. We have collected data and information at first hand. Figures on statistical findings have been located from an external source also i.e. population data of tribe in Assam. We call this secondary research, and this area of research methodology typically involved reading published journals, newspapers and other materials to obtain the information we
needed second hand. Research methodology is the way in which it specified how we have gone to retrieve all the important data and information that was needed to find out the features of economic life of Hmar tribe as a marginalized least-developed group of south Assam society.

In our statistical survey and enquiry, a search for the collection of facts regarding economic aspects of Hmar life was made. So a statistical investigation was undertaken in order to collect information that otherwise was not available. It was for a specific purpose of study. Data collection has been an important aspect of our research study. We have avoided inaccurate data collection so as to avoid the invalid results. We began our work with the collection of data i.e., numerical facts or raw data and from these raw data, we analyze the data and come to a final conclusion about income and savings of agriculturist Hmar tribe.

Our data are obtained from both the primary source and the secondary source. A primary source is one that itself collects the data and the secondary source is one that makes available data which were collected by some other agency (Gupta, 1995). So, primary data are obtained by a study specifically designed to fulfill the data needs of the problem at hand. Such data are original in character and are generated in large number of surveys conducted mostly by Government and also by research bodies. On the other hand, data which are not originally collected but rather obtained from published or unpublished sources are known as secondary data. In our study, we use both primary and secondary data to fulfill our objectives.

In this study, the required primary data are collected from the heads of the Hmar households. Among the Hmar, the male is the head, generally an old aged male. We have collected both primary data as well as secondary information. Primary data was collected through personal interview and group discussion in the field of villages of Cachar district. Secondary data was collected from published book, copies of journals and government records including the census handbook, available in the library. We conducted direct personnel interview with the help of interview schedules i.e., there is face-to-face contact with the persons from whom the information is obtained. Our interview schedules had nine broad number of questions occupations, monthly expenditure of the households, credit, households assets
especially related to livestock, savings, land holdings, details of dwelling condition (housing), health, education and some miscellaneous question like number of persons working outside the village, purpose of working and whether it help in improving the household economy are also asked in the interview and group discussion. The questions were framed with an eye to fulfill the objectives of the study.

In total, thirty five group discussions were organized in different sample villages in the month of February 2007 to September 2008. The main discussion was on household’s economy like occupation, income, savings, land holdings, health, and number of dependency members and level of education. Secondary data related to tribal populations, rural population of the south Assam and Assam, data on agriculture land, cropped, irrigation etc also collected from various official agencies and organizations. Direct observation and group discussion were conducted to supplement the primary data. The five years data deals mainly with the health and some information regarding their occupation and land holdings.

The preliminary field investigation was done during the period from January 2007 to December 2008. Field study was also made thereafter a number of times as and when it was felt necessary. The first group discussion was organized in Saisel village under Lakhipur block in the month of February 2007, in the same month a group discussion was also conducted in Digar village and Hebron village of Lakhipur development block. In month of March to May 2007 a group discussions was also organized in some other village under Lakhipur development block in Soron village and nine group discussion in Hmarkhawlien covering 90 sample households. In the month of June and July 2007 another two group discussion and interview was held in Baliswar and Noksa village under Borjalenga development block.

Another interview was also held in Tupidhor village and Moinathol village under Binakandi development block in the month of January 2008. In the month of February 2008, a group discussion was held in Budon and Muoltluong village under Raja Bajar development block and in March to April 2008, interviewed schedule and group discussion was held with the sample households in Jurkhal and Dolakhal village under Palonghat development block. In the month of June and July 2008
another group discussion was held in Kumbha village, Muoldam village and Ngaiban Ramthar village under Udharbond development block. In our sample, the Hmars of Silchar town is also included. They came here in Silchar for mainly government jobs and residing in Itkhola, Trunk Road, Tarapur, Ambicapatty, College Road and Medical campus in rented house as well as quarters. In Silchar, a sample of 10 households was selected and an interviewed schedule was held in the month of September 2008. After interviewed schedule and group discussion, we have visited those sample villages for cross checking of the primary data and a discussion was also made with the village headman and teachers serving in those villages.

The primary data collection was undertaken relating to the year 2007 to 2008; secondary information was collected from published sources since 2003. Some of the data for last five years was also gathered from the interview schedule and group discussions with the sample households, village headman and L.P. Teachers residing in the villages.

Data Limitations

As regards the household schedules, the data were obtained by interview method, with the head of the household recollecting the information from his memory. We found that, maintenance of accounts by the households in rural areas (especially in tribal households) is conspicuous by its absence in the study area of Hmars in South-Assam. In spite of all the efforts made to elicit correct information by careful interview, we found that some household’s data suffers from ‘laps of memory’ on the part of the respondents.

We made cross-checking on details about their income, savings, expenditure, credit or loan taken in various ways. Our methods of cross-checking of primary data was discussion and interviewed with the respective village headman and primary school teachers and also with some educated persons in the villages.
Map-1: Sketch Map of South Assam Showing districts, 2008

Source: http://www.mapofindia.com
Note: The dotted and shaded area shows the Sample district to which our study of Hmar tribe pertains.
Map-2: Sketch Map of Cachar District Showing Sample Hmar Villages, 2008

Source: http://www.mapsofindia.com
Note: The ‘dots’ are the locations of sample villages in the district of Cachar where the researcher has canvassed the interview schedule and held group discussions.

Almost forty numbers of respondents especially residing in forest reserve land were initially reluctant to give out correct information regarding their income from collection of forest product and sawing household’s heads had the apprehension that they may be penalized for the violation of forest laws. Another fifteen households from Hmarkhawlien and Saisel villages were not willing to give out correct information about the quantum of loans borrowed from private money lenders. The reason was that the money lenders had previously threatened them not to disclose the matter.
We have used the offices of the local teachers and village headman and made an arrangement of public meetings and discussions, this was for the purpose of generating proper understanding and confidence of the respondents. Through frequent efforts were made to visits help from teachers and group discussion to minimize the limitations of survey method.

A number of discrepancies have been detected even in the published data of the secondary sources. This is because there is lack of co-ordination among the different governmental organizations. They do not maintain comparable and correlating records. Given the apathy callousness and indifference, community wise information for number of population, occupation, income etc. are not available for the case of Scheduled Tribe (Hills) in the plain districts of Assam including south Assam after 1971. The secondary data over time can show the trend accurately because the over-estimation in one period cancels the other over-estimations at another period. So it captures reliably the trend but actual figures at a point of yes are certainly not reliable.

**Sampling Technique**

In our study, sampling is simply the process of learning about the population on the basis of a sample drawn from it. A sample is that part of the universe of the Hmar populations which we have selected for the purpose of investigation. A sample method exhibit the characteristic of the universe. A word literally means “Small Universe” we have use different types of sampling.

In this study, multi-stage sampling method is adopted. Under this method, the random selection has been made of primary, intermediate and final (or the ultimate) units from a given population or stratum. There have been several stages in which the sampling process was carried out. At the first stage, units were sampled by some suitable method, and then a sample of second stage units was selected from each of the selected first stage units.
In our case, at the first stage, one district, i.e. Cachar out of three districts, namely, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi of South-Assam is purposely selected because there are a very negligible numbers of Hmar populations in Karimganj and Hailakandi districts.

Figure: 3.1

Percentage Wise Distribution of Hmar Sample Household, Cachar Assam: 2007-08

Source: Adapted from Table: 3.1.
After that all the Hmar inhabitants’ villages are identified from the official record of the Barak Valley Hills Tribe Development Council, Silchar. Out of 15 blocks in Cachar district, seven blocks are purposively selected at the second stage because in other blocks there are no Hmar villages. Out of seven blocks a total of seventeen villages including Silchar town of Hmar are purposively selected and from each of the selected villages 20 percent households were selected randomly. In this way the study covers 250 sample households.

The first group is the sample villages which contain only four sample households, the second group is the villages which include only seven sample households, the third group is the sample villages which contain ten sample households and the fourth group is the sample villages which have fourteen sample households. The fifth group is those sample villages which contain 15 sample households for investigation and the sixth group is a large village which contain ninety sample households.

The above sample villages are selected from seven blocks taking 20 percent of the total household of the sample villages. From table 3.1, the first two villages are from Borjalenga development blocks. In both the villages, they have shifting cultivation in the hills and settle cultivation in the plains. But settle cultivation is used for only subsidiary to shifting cultivation.

Both the villages have unmattled road connection, but in Baliswar villages power connection is totally absent. The nearest market is Dwarbond Bajar. It is a weekly market and all the villagers dispose their product in the market day. In case of sample households taken from Silchar town, except one household all others are staying in a rented house and quarters. They are all government employees and their economy is far better comparison to other sample Hmar villages.

The fourth and fifth villages are under Palonghat development block. The main stay of their economy is shifting cultivation combine with orange cultivation. Local businessman usually purchases their product in their villages. Though, the road communication is not good but they can expose their product to the local market by
boat in the river nearby their village. In both the villages power connection was available till 2003, but most of the current lines have been damaged due to non-repair by electric department. Now they have no power connection, they used to manage by kerosine lamp.

Table:3.1.
List of Sample Hmar Villages and Number of Sample Households in South Assam: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Name of the Villages</th>
<th>Distance from Baliswar in Kilometers (Approx)</th>
<th>Number of Sample Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Average size of households in terms of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Baliswar</td>
<td>00.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Noksa</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Silchar Town</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dolakhal</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Jurkhal</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Muoldam</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ngaiban Ramthar</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kumbha</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Digar</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Hebron</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Hmarkhawlien</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Saisel</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Soron</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Budon</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Muolthuang</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Moinathol</td>
<td>150.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Tupidhor</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>All Villages</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data from Field Survey, 2007-08

The village muoldam, Ngaiban Ramthar and Kumbha are located under Udharbond development block. The main occupation is shifting cultivation in the hills. In Kumbha villages, some households have rubber plantation for subsidiary occupation. The other two villages are frequently engaged in hunting, fishing to supplement their economy. Only the village Kumbha has power connection and it is nearby the tea garden road. In case of other two villages, infrastructure is totally absent. All transaction work is done through human labor. The villages namely Digar, Hebron, Hmarkhawlien, Saisel and Soron are under Lakhipur development block. Where majority of the Hmar of south Assam concentrated. The village Hmarkhawlien is one
of the big Hamr village even in Assam and the rest four villages have fifty to hundred households only. The three villages Hmarkhawlien, Digar and Hebron are near national highway 52 adjoining from Silchar to Jiribam. In those three villages communication and infrastructure is good. In Hmarkhawlien village, some people are engaged in tea stall, grocery and local merchants. In every morning, there is a small market in the village called ‘good morning market’. In that market vegetables, fish, rice etc. are brought and sold. Local non-tribal are also attending the daily market. The main stay of their economy is shifting cultivation and Pine Apple cultivation. The other two villages namely Saisel and Soron are in a remote interriour places where there is no power connection and road communication is very poor. Shifting cultivation is their main occupation.

The villages, Budon and Muoltluong comes under Raja Bajar development block. In the two villages their main occupation is shifting cultivation in the hills. Some households have settle cultivation in the plain, but it is their subsidiary occupation. Muoltluong village has a mettalled road connection and power connection. In Budon village it is totally absent. The last two villages are located under Binakandi development block. Both the villages are so far. Thought it is a Cachar district but all their neighbouring villages are from Manipur state. They are also practicing shifting cultivation. Their product is exposed to Lakhipur once in a week through water ways in the Barak river. In both the villages no power or roads communication is available and travelling is mainly through water ways. Villages which contain ten sample households is maximum in the Hmar villages.

From each of the selected households, information has been obtained related to their occupation, income, saving, investment, standard of living, credit etc. Information has also been collected regarding non-economic factors like education, health, and socio-cultural factors etc. which affect their economy. Information was also sought about their economic problems which they have and which stand in the way of their economic betterment.

All the information obtained is classified and analyzed according to the objectives of the study. Percentage, average trend are estimated where necessary. On the basis of such result, through tabular analysis, attempt is made to analyze the data and
conclusion drawn. Thereafter we use the regression model to test the hypothesis that has been developed for the study.

### 3.3. Analysis Design and Statistical Tools

In our study, all the raw data collected in the field work are firstly classified and arranged in groups and classes. The data we group are on occupation and number of households participating in different occupation like agriculture, service, business and others. There are further tabulations of data collected on sizes of land holdings such as landless, marginal farmers, small farmers and semi-medium, data on Hmar household’s dependence on one or more occupation, particulars of livestock of Hmar sample households like cows, pigs, ducks etc, and data on numbers of earning members.

While we adopt descriptive framework, tables are also on the annual average income of all sample household, annual average savings of the sample households, credit structure of the sample households are place in one group each. In our study, we use simple statistical table because it is regarded as one of the simplest and most revealing devices for summarizing data and presenting primary raw data in a meaningful fashion.

Our statistical table contains quantitative data in vertical columns and horizontal rows of numbers with sufficient explanatory and qualifying words, phrases and statements in the form of titles, headings and notes to make clear the full meaning of data and their origin. A systematic arrangement of data pertaining to saving, income, occupation, family size, land holdings etc are in columns and rows. Rows are horizontal arrangement whereas columns are vertical ones. Our purpose of using statistical table in this study is to simplify the presentation and to facilitate comparisons among the different variables. The simplification results from the clear-cut and systematic arrangement, which enables us to locate the desired information. In our study, we use statistical table because of the following three main reasons.
Statistical table simplifies complex data: when data are tabulated all unnecessary details and repetitions are avoided. Our data on population, occupation, income, savings, land holdings, family size etc is presented systematically in columns and rows. There is thus a considerable saving in time taken in understanding what is represented by the data and all confusion is expected to avoid. Also a large amount of space is saved because of non-duplicating of headings and designations; the description of the top of a column serves for all terms beneath it. We have given titles to all tables used in our study.

Our statistical table is expected to facilitate comparison: In our analysis, we use statistical table expecting to facilitate comparison between the variables. Since a table is divided into various parts and for each part there are totals and sub-totals, the relationship between different parts of data can be studied much more easily with the help of table than without it. We have made total and sub-total of data of different variables in different tables and figures. Our statistical table is expected to identify to the data easily. When we arrange the data in a table with title and number we expected that they can be distinctly identified and can be used as a source of reference in the interpretation of a problem. We have total number of tables heading at different chapter. We have given the list of tables after the content page.

**Average**

Normally there are three types of average, namely- arithmetic mean, geometric mean and harmonic mean. In our study, we use arithmetic mean because it is easy to compute and simple to understand our analysis. It can determine the value of our variables and can rigidly defined, arithmetic mean can also be subjected to further algebraic treatment and advanced statistical theory.

Moreover it provides a good standard of comparisons since extreme values can cancel each other when the numbers of observation are large. For example, average income, average savings, average land holdings of the Hmar sample households. In our study, it is difficult to predict the exact amount of monthly income of households who are engaged in agriculture and business. Their incomes are always fluctuating,
so we use arithmetic mean in some statistical tables to find out the average. In our thesis, arithmetic mean is defined as the sum of numerical values of each and every item of a series divided by the total number. They are also other types of average, such as geometric mean harmonic mean etc. which is not suitable in our thesis.

**Percentage**

In our thesis, percentage is a way of expressing a number of a fraction of 100 *per cent* meaning “per hundred”. It is often denoted by using the percent sign, “%”. Here, percentages are used to express how large/small one quantity is, relative to another quantity. In other words, by using percentage we explained and predict increase or decrease in income, savings, size of land holdings by an individual households, number of households engaged in different occupation, number of earnings member of households and make comparisons of economic variables like income, savings, size of land holdings, and level of education etc. of different sample villages.

**Diagrams**

Simple bar diagrams are the most common type of diagrams used in practice. We used simple bar diagram to represent our variables. For example, occupation, income, savings, credit etc. for various percentage or years can be shown by using simple bar diagram. Since these are of the same width and only length varies, it becomes very easy for the reader to study the relationship. We used simple bar diagram because simple bar diagram are readily understood even by those unaccustomed to reading charts or those who are not chart-minded and also possess the outstanding advantage that they are the simplest and the easiest to make. Moreover, when a large number of items are to be compared they are the only form that can be used effectively.
Pie Diagram

With the help of pie diagram we have shown how the income of the Hmar households is distributed over different occupations like agriculture, service and business etc. In this study, we use pie diagrams mainly because of two reasons. Pie charts provide the advantage of functioning as a visual aid to help our audience examine and interpret the data. Data are often difficult to understand when presented as a series of black-and-white statistics and calculations.

The pie chart creates a visual model, which people can use when comparing different data sets. Using different colors, pie charts divide information into sections resembling pie slices. Each "slice" is usually accompanied by a number of percentages, and its size changes accordingly. Second, Pie charts use percentages to illustrate quantities. This is a clear advantage when presenting statistics such as occupation and incomes. The effectiveness of pie charts for examining percentages lies in audience members immediately understanding what we intend to communicate. The simple presentation of data makes it accessible to audiences of all ages.

Use of Regression

In our thesis, particularly in chapter five and two sections of chapter six, we use linear regression analysis as a basic technique for measuring or estimating the relationship among our economic variables that constitute the essence of economic theory and economic life. Our main purpose of using regressions is to formulate principally income and savings models in testable form, estimate the coefficient values of the models and test them as to acceptance or rejection. Regression analysis provided estimates of values of the dependent variable from values of the independent variable.

Regression equation provides estimates of the dependent variable when values of the independent variable are inserted into the equation. Secondly, with the help of regression analysis we obtained a measure of the error involved in using the
regression line as a basis for estimation. Thirdly, with the help of regression coefficient we calculate the correlation coefficient. The square of correlation coefficient (r), called coefficient of determination, measures the degree of association of correlation that exists between the two variables. It assesses the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that has been accounted for by the regression equation. In general, the greater the value of $R^2$ the better is the fit and the more useful the regression equation as a predictive device.

In our thesis, we did not use other statistical models like correlation exercise because correlation technique assumes that the variable are at least values along an interval scale, which means multiplying and dividing them make some mathematical sense. Actually, numbers on a ratio scale, with decimals, are preferred. This assumption is violated all the time and violating it only makes it more difficult to obtain statistically significant results. Moreover, this technique does not serve purpose of our study.

**R², T-Test and F-Statistics**

In our thesis, we use R², t-test and F-statistics to explain the results of the regression models. R² is a measure of the extent to which the total variation of the dependent variable is explained by the regression. It is not difficult to show that the R² statistic necessarily takes on a value between zero and one. A high value of R² suggests that, the regression model explains the variation in the dependent variable well, is obviously important if one wishes to use the model for predictive or forecasting purposes. It is considerably less important if one is simply interested in particular parameter estimates.

To be sure, a large unexplained variation in the dependent variable will increase the standard error of the coefficients in the model (which are a function of the estimated variance of the noise term), and hence regressions with low values of R² will often (but by no means always) yield parameter estimates with small t-statistics for any null hypothesis. Because this consequence of a low R² will be reflected in the t statistics, however, it does not afford any reason to be concerned about a low R² per
standard error. So, $R^2$ is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable explains by the regression model. The value of $R^2$ ranges from 0 to 1.

Small values indicate that the model does not fit the data well. If the value of $R^2$ is ranges from 0.5 to 1, it means the model fit well the data. Again, the value of $R^2$ ranges from 0 to 0.49 it means that the model does not fit well the data. So, $R^2$ is use to determine which model is best. In our thesis we chose a model with a high value of $R^2$ that does not contain too many variables. Models with too many variables are often over fit and hard to interpret.

We have used only two estimators to test the significance: t-test and F-test. The t-test is probably, the most commonly used statistical data analysis procedure for hypothesis testing. In our thesis, the ‘t’ statistic helped us to determine the relative importance of variables used such as occupation, income, savings family size, size of land holdings, literacy in the model. Wherever the calculated value was found to be lesser than the tabulated value we accepted the hypothesis otherwise we rejected the hypothesis in our regressions model.

The F statistics is the regression mean square (MSR) divided by the residual mean square (MSE). It is also known as Variance Ratio Test. An F-test is any statistical test in which the test statistic had an F-distribution under the null hypothesis. In our thesis, we often used when comparing statistical models related to occupation, income, saving, family size, size of land holdings and literacy rate that have been fit to a data set of $R^2$ value and T-value, in order to identify the model that best fits the Hmar population from which the data were sampled.

In our thesis, if the significance value of the F statistics was found to be (smaller than 0.05) then we assumed that the independent variable is the fittest value in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. If the significance value of F was found to be larger than say (0.05) then the independent variable i.e. monthly average income from different occupation such as agriculture, service, savings etc do not explain the variation in the dependent variable monthly average income, savings etc. On the other hand if F value is less than the tabulated value the null hypothesis is
accepted and it is inferred that both sample comes from the population having same variance.

**Remarks**

The purpose of the chapter was not only to elaborate upon the way the primary data was collected from the Hmar inhabited settlements in Cachar in the year 2007-08 but also to describe the stages in which the research was carried out. Nonetheless, we have furnished the conceptual framework because the analysis of data in chapter four, five and six are influenced by our conceptual understanding about backwardness, cultivation method, income and non-economic facts of Hmar life and universe. We have also presented the main tools and techniques that are used in the succeeding chapters to process and analyze the empirical information. Our main reliance is on description through average and percentage presented in tables and estimates of regression coefficients. We have also used cross-tabulation as a way of comparison among economic variables determining the backwardness of Hmar.
Chapter – 4

Backwardness:
A Descriptive Profile of Sample Hmar
In this chapter we undertake the empirical analysis of economic life of Hmar tribe on the basis of primary data and qualitative information collected from 250 sample households, spread over 17 villages from Cachar district of south Assam, in the year 2007-08. The basic information about size and composition of households and nature of family (nuclear or joint) is complemented with the classification of principal occupations of sample families. This is dealt in the first section of the chapter. The second section discusses about the land resource availability to the sample Hmar and the third section highlights methods of production in Jhum cultivation and grazing. In the fourth section, we have discussed the size-class of annual income of households and savings. In the fifth section, we analyze the credit structure and indebtedness phenomenon. The lack of entrepreneurship, leading to backwardness of Hmar and consequent livelihood pattern is discussed in the sixth section. A couple of remarks on the economic status of the tribe are added at the last.

4.1. Household and Occupations

It is interesting to look at the characteristics of households and the occupations of a tribe which is quite small in size in terms of both aggregate population and the area of residence in the country. It is interesting to observe as to how such a small and neglected tribe has maintained its basic features, despite being influenced by its changing surroundings, over a long time in the course of history.

A Hmar household is as yet the basic residential unit in which economic production, consumption; inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out. A Hmar household consists of all individuals who live in the same dwellings. The Hmar of south Assam are as yet strongly patriarchal. The father is the head of the household and his orders are obeyed by all the household members. It is the father, who represents the household interest in all important meetings in the village or outside the villages. The village headmen usually call a public meeting at the beginning of every year for discussing about the selection of land side for jhum cultivation. In case the father is absent (dead), the eldest member of the family is acting as a head of the household. It may be the widow woman, in case of the
absence of mature male members in the household. The normal duty of the mother is to raise children and look after the home. She prepares meals for the household members, carry firewood from the jungles for domestic use. The duty of the mother is also to help the father in his daily work. Children look upon parents with a great respect. Sons or daughter even after they have grown up and established their own home will consider it disrespectful to call or say their parent’s name.

In the traditional Hmar society, there used to be in the sixties a joint family system (Pudaite, 1963, p.40). When the sons get a wife he brings his bride into the father’s house. The bribe is thoroughly indoctrinated in the household tradition and practice. The couple stays there until they have several children of their own and help to establish the household. Generally they move out to establish their own home only when they have children of their own who are of marriageable age. They are then properly sent off by the entire household, and their own new home would be jointly built by the entire household. This type of household was considered as healthy environment in the traditional Hmar society. This was the model given by Pudaite in the 1960s. The decrease in the fertility of soil in the hilly land in which the Hmar inhabits, the return of jhum cultivation is decrease which compelled many Hmar households to break the joint family system which was preferred in the traditional society.

**Type and Sizes of Household**

In our sample, studied in 2007-08, there are in total 17 villages and 250 households under consideration. The total number of males in the sample is 783 and females 636. Sum total of population is 1879 persons. The adult-population ratio in the sample is 0.7. There are 460 children below the age of fourteen who depends totally on their parents and the child-population ratio is 0.2.

During our field survey, we found that there are three types of Hmar household formation in south Assam, namely, nuclear household, joint household and extended
household. In our study, we mean by a ‘household’ all individuals who live in the same dwellings, eating food together at least once in a day and sharing all properties.

The nuclear households are those Hmar sample households consisting of the father, mother and their unmarried children living together in a single house. The married sons and daughters or the grandfather, grandmother are excluded in the nuclear household. But the divorce sons or daughter return to the father’s house are included in our nuclear household.

Table - 4.1  
Demographic and Household Profile of Sample Hmar: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Number of Sample Villages</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Number of Sample Households</td>
<td>250.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Number of Males in the Sample</td>
<td>783.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Number of Females in the Sample</td>
<td>636.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Total number of Males and Females in the Sample (3+4)</td>
<td>1419.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Number of Children in the Sample (Below 14 year of age)</td>
<td>460.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Population (5+6)</td>
<td>1879.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Adult-Population Ratio in the Sample (5/7)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Child-Population Ratio (6/7)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

All the Hmar sample villages have nuclear household, but nuclear households are highly concentrated in the sample villages like, Silchar, Hmarkhawlien, Digger and Hebron village. The second formation of household in our study is joint household. The joint households are those Hmar sample family living together with their married sons and bride. In this category of household, normally the sizes of the family members are bigger than that of the nuclear household.

In the Hmar joint household, those families staying with their uncle and aunty are not included. The joint households are found mainly in the sample Hmar villages like Dolakhal, Jurkhal, and Soron and Budon village. The third category of household we have in our sample survey is extended household. Extended household we mean to those Hmar family who stayed together with their uncle, aunty, nephew with their grand father and mother. Generally, the Hmar extended households of south Assam
have big family members. Extended household is found mainly in our sample villages like Saisel, Tupidhor, Ngaiban Ramthar and Noksa village.

Table - 4.2
Nature and Type of Sample Household and Characteristics: 2007-08
(Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Type of Households</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>171.0</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All Household (1+2+3)</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Out of 250 Hmar sample households in south Assam, about 171 (68.4 percent) households belong to the nuclear households. The other 50 (20.0 percent) sample households have joint households and only 29 (11.6 percent) households have extended. In the traditional tribal society and the Hmar in particular, generally they stayed in joined and extended household. Our sample survey reveals that, transition is taking place in the household formation among the Hmar of south Assam and at present majority of them lived in a nuclear household.

The vertical axis shows the percentage of household of the Hmar in south Assam and the horizontal axis shows the nature of household. It is found that 68.4 percent of the Hmar sample households belong to nuclear household and 20.0 percent are lived in joint households. The remaining only 11.6 percent are in extended households. Now we will see the size of Hmar household of south Assam.

Our sample survey reveals that, majority of the Hmar (about 26.8 percent) households have six numbers of members and about 25.2 percent have a household size of five members. About 11.2 percent of the Hmars have a household size of seven members and about 10 percent have four members. The other 9.6 percent have only three members in the household. There are also some household who have a household size of eight members which is accounted for 6.4 percent. Another 4.8
percent household has nine members in the family and about 2 percent of the household are having a household size of ten members. Only 1.6 percent of the Hmar households have two members and about 1.2 percent has a household size of eleven members. And the remaining 0.8 percent has family members of twelve. It means that, normally the Hmar household of south Assam consists of six members.

Figure: 4.1
Nature of Sample Household (in Percentage): 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

Source: Adapted from Table: 4.2
The analysis shows that joint household systems consisting of large numbers of household members still exist among the Hmar communities even today. However, it appears that the Hmar tribes have realized the importance of small household and they are gradually adopting the concept of family planning.

Table: 4.3

Size of Sample Hmar Household in Cachar, Assam: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Size of Household (Members)</th>
<th>Total Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>00.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>02.0</td>
<td>04.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>03.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>04.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>05.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>06.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>07.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>08.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>09.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>05.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>03.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>02.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>All Sizes of Households</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

**Pattern of Housing (Ownership)**

One of the basic necessities of human life is a house to live in. Ownership of such necessities gives a psychological satisfaction. It also reflects the economic status and living standard of the people. Tribals living in village have, by and large, had their own houses and very few live in rented accommodation.

The tribal’s concept of a house is different from that of urban understanding. Most of the Hmar tribal in south Assam live in huts constructed by using locally-available material like straw, bamboos, wooden logs and mud. Bricks and Cement are rarely used.
Some of the households have only one room in the house which is used for all purposes – cooking, living and sleeping. Those Hmar households who are economically better off are having houses with multiple rooms. In our sample study in Cachar district, the data are collected with regard to important facilities like types of house, water source, electricity, latrines, bath rooms, etc. so as to highlight the economic well being of the family of Hmar in south Assam.

Table: 4.4
Type of Housing among Sample Hmar in Cachar (Assam): 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Type of House Structure</th>
<th>Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hut (Kutcha House)</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assam Type (Semi-Pucca House)</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>RCC Building (Pucca House)</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All Type of Housing</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

It is found that out of 250 sample sizes of the Hmar household in south Assam, above 116 households (46.4 percent) each are living in huts (Kutcha) house and Assam type (Semi-Pucca) house. The remaining only about 18 household (7.2 percent) have own RCC building (Pucca House).

A katcha house is one which is made of wooden and bamboo and the roof are made of straw. Generally, it is erected in 0.1 acreage of land. A semi-Pucca house in Assam type is one whose half wall are made of bricks and the reaming wall is made of clay, cement with fruited wooden door but on the top the roof is made of tin sheets. Normally, it is built in 0.2 acreage of land or less. A RCC building is a house which is full of bricks, cement and iron with wooden door and windows and the top is also made of cement. Generally, a RCC building is bigger than hut and semi-pucca house and it is normally erected in 0.3 or more acreage of land.
The percentage of household structure shows that the sample Hmar household mainly lived in hut and semi pucca house and only few numbers of household have RCC building.

Figure: 4.2

Type of Housing of Hmar Sample Household: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

Source: Adapted from Table: 4.4.

Structure of Occupations

We have found in our field of Hmar-inhabited villages in Cachar that the tribal household members are engaged in a multiple of professions or occupations to earn
their respective livelihood throughout the year. Except for the pure profession of a service job-holder (whether private, semi or government service), rest of the professions are of mixed in nature. For example, there are pure Jhumia, who does nothing except practicing shifting cultivation throughout the year. But there are some Jhumias who are in the slack season also looks after the livestock and produce the supplement to livelihood. They are not pure or all-round Jhumia.

We have also a category of profession called horticulture marketeer. These are the tribal people who are either do not have livestock or do not have access to the group of Jhumias, and therefore, they are dependent upon employment and income generated by the marketing of horticulture products. In sum, we have according to first classification, four principal occupations: pure shifting cultivator, shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer, horticulture marketeer and private/government service job holders.

Out of 250 sample Hmar households, we find that 140 (56.0 percent) are engaged in pure shifting cultivator. There are also 31(12.4 percent) households whose occupation is shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer and about 36(14.4 percent) households belong to horticulture marketeer. The Hmar sample households are also engaged in private/government service job, in such occupation about 43 (17.2 percent) households have earn their livelihood. In the first classification of occupation, we found that majority of the Hmar are engaged in pure-shifting cultivator.

Table: 4.5.

Types of Occupation among Sample Hmar Households:
2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Types of Occupation</th>
<th>Numbers of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pure-Shifting (Jhum) Cultivator</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shifting Cultivator-cum-livestock Rearer</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Horticulture Marketeer</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Private / Government Service job holders</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All Occupations (Professions)</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected form Field Survey
We have also adopted a second classification of occupation in which pure agriculturist comprise of pure shifting cultivator, shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer and horticulture marketeer. Some members of the agriculturist are also working as hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers. By virtue of residing in the rural area they name their occupation as agriculturist. The total number of agriculturists in the second classification is higher than sum total of first, second and third occupation of the first classification because of inclusion of hawker-cum-retailer-cum-cloth sellers.

Table- 4.6
Types of Occupation of Hmar Sample Households: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. No</th>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pure Agriculturist</td>
<td>190.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Hawkers-cum-Retailers-cum-Cloth Sellers</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Private/Government Service Job Holders</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All Occupations</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected form Field Survey

In the second classification of occupations, we combine pure shifting cultivator, shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer and horticulture marketeer in a pure agriculturist and we found that about 190 (76.0 percent) of the Hmar sample households are pure agriculturist and the remaining about 17 (6.8 percent) of the Hmar households are hawkers-cum-retailer-cum-cloth sellers who are also in the category of agriculturist only by living in the rural area. Households belong to private/government service job holders are same with the first classification. So, we found that most of the Hmar sample households of south Assam are agriculturist.

**Relation between Household and Occupation**

The economy of the Hmar sample household is very much related with their occupational practice. The sample households who have profitable occupation have comparatively enjoyed a better life. It is important to see the occupation wise
distribution of the Hmar sample household. Accordingly, we made a comparison between the household and their occupation, through exercise in cross-tabulation. It helps us in understanding as to whether a specific type of household has any impact on choice of an occupation (professional) among Hmar.

Table: 4.7

Cross Tabulation of Household and Occupation wise Distribution of Sample Hmar Household: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Type of Households</th>
<th>According to First Classification of Occupations</th>
<th>All Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pure Shifting Cultivator</td>
<td>Shifting Cultivator-cum-Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td>105.0 (42.0)</td>
<td>21.0 (8.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Joint</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.0 (12.0)</td>
<td>02.0 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extended</td>
<td></td>
<td>05.0 (2.0)</td>
<td>08.0 (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Table: 4.2 and 4.5

In our sample study, there are in total 171 nuclear households in Cachar district of south Assam. Out of that 105 (42.0 percent) are pure shifting cultivator and about 21.0 (8.4 percent) are shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer and the remaining 25.0 (10.0 percent) households are in horticulture marketeer and about 20.0 (8.0 percent) households are private/government service job holder.

There are also about 50.0 joint Hmar household who are in different occupation in Cachar district of south Assam. It is found that, 30.0 (12.0 percent) households are pure shifting cultivator and only 02.0 (0.8 percent) households are shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer. The remaining 03.0 (1.2 percent) are as horticulture marketeer and 15.0 (6.0 percent) are private/government service job holder. In an extended household, about 05.0 (2.0 percent) are pure shifting cultivator and 08.0 (3.2 percent) each of the extended households are shifting cultivator-cum-livestock.
rearer, horticulture marketeer and private/government service job holder. It means that majority of the Hmar households are pure shifting cultivator and the highest percentage belong to joint households. In our second classification, we have another three types of occupations, namely- agriculturist, hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers.

Table: 4.8

Household and Occupation-wise Distribution of Sample Hmar Household: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Type of Households</th>
<th>According to Second Classification of Occupations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pure Agriculturist</td>
<td>Hawkers-cum-Retailers-cum-Cloth Sellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nuclear</td>
<td>144.0 (57.6)</td>
<td>7.0 (2.8)</td>
<td>20.0 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Joint</td>
<td>27.0 (10.8)</td>
<td>8.0 (3.2)</td>
<td>15.0 (6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extended</td>
<td>19.0 (7.6)</td>
<td>2.0 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.8 (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All</td>
<td>190.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Table: 4.2 and 4.6

In the our second classification of occupation, we found that out of 250 sample households about 171.0 households belong to nuclear family. Out of the nuclear household, about 144.0 (57.6 percent) belong to pure agriculturist and about 7.0 (2.8 percent) are hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers. The occupation belong to private/government service job holders are same with the first classification. Out of 50.0 joint households, about 27.0 (10.8 percent) belong to pure agriculturist and only 8.0 (3.2 percent) are hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers. In an extended household, the highest number of households belong to pure agriculturist which consists of 19.0 (7.6 percent) and only 0.2 (0.8 percent) are hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers. It indicates that agriculture is a very important occupation for the Hmar of south Assam.
In short we may say that, the Hmar people of south Assam have three types of households- nuclear, joint and extended. Among them, the highest numbers of household belong to joint family. Accordingly, they have three broad categories of occupations and there are mainly engaged in agriculture, hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers and private/government service job holders. Their common practice of agriculture is jhum cultivations in the hills. About 140 households were totally depends on jhum cultivation. In such cultivation, there is no scope for scientific improvement. The Hmar people use simple tools for production. Our investigation results reveal that our first hypothesis is true, because in jhum cultivation modern technique of production is not applied. Only primitive methods of production are applied. The low level of returns in jhum cultivation and the large participation is one of the determinants of Hmar economic backwardness.

4.2. Land Resource

Land is an important resource for the Hmar economy. All production of Hmar depends on the availability of land. It gives not only their livelihood, but also important for building houses, construction of roads etc. The size and fertility of land determines their income. A fertile land generally gives more production and thereby increases the Hmar income. The common occupations of Hmar like jhum cultivation, wet land cultivation, cattle rearing, and horticult ures totally depend on the availability of land.

In our sample survey, there are three types of land owned by the Hmar people of south Assam - communal land, forest land and individual (patta) land. All these categories of land are used for cultivation and are useful in generation of livelihood for tribe. In a communal land system, land is treated as communal property and managed by the community through various sets of rules practiced over generations. The cultivable land is divided among the households by the village headman for cultivation purpose only. The councils (Khawnbawl) under the leadership of the Headman selected the sites for jhum cultivation from the community owned land. Usually the villages are named after the village headman (Lal) and “his post is
generally hereditary”. The position of the headman is always coveted as he is the most honored person in any social, religious or cultural transaction in the village.

In a communal land system, a land document is only in the hands of the village Headman. No one can transfer land or sell to another person. Land is allotted only for production purpose, in south Assam; we called this type of land as ‘Jhum Land Permission’ because the government allotted unsurveyed khash land to the Headman only for jhum cultivation purpose.

But in case of villages under forest reserved land, the Headmen are not authorized to distribute land for cultivation like the village under jhum land permission. Village Headmen are selected by the villagers according to their customary law only to run the village administration. Under forest reserved land, no one is entitled for land documents. Cultivation and selection of land fully depend on the relation between the villagers and the forest officials. The Hmar sample villages, for example, Tupidhor, Moinathol, Dolakhal, Jurkhal, Noksa, Baliswar, and Soron are located under forest area reserved land in Cachar district.

There are no pattas systems of land in the villages under jhum land permission and Forest reserved land. However, there are some households who have pattas land nearby the village in plain areas, which are used for paddy cultivation we called as private individual land. The first two systems are based on community owned land. The only difference is that, in case of Jhum land permission, the government allotted about 100 bighas of unsurveyed land (khash) to the village headman for the community use on written documents (all the Jhum land permission in Cachar district are issued by Deputy Commissioner) and the headman distributes among the villagers for building house and cultivation purpose. But no one has the right to purchase or sell the land under jhum land permission, i.e., no personal ownership rights are granted.

Out of seventeen sample villages (including Silchar town), seven villages are under Jhum land permission. These villages are Saisel, Budon, Hebron, Muolaluong, Kumbha, Muoldam, and Ngaiban Ramthar.
Under these seven villages, the village Headman (Lal) is responsible for village administration. There are also two sample villages located under pattas system: Hmarkhawlien and Digar Fulartal village. Though they are tribal (Hmar) villages, lands are owned by individual households. In these two villages, there are no Headmen like the other Hmar villages, but they have village authority which consists of president, secretary, finance secretary, treasurers and five committee members. The members of the authority are elected by the villagers for a period of five years. Their duty is to look after the village administration according to the Hmar customary law, but they have no power over land like the Headmen in jhum land permission. In our seventeen sample villages of south Assam, the Hmars are divided into three broad types of land such as private individual land, communal land and forest land.

Table: 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Land Type</th>
<th>Total Land in Acres</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Private Individual Land</td>
<td>155.0</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Communal Land</td>
<td>360.0</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Forest Land</td>
<td>275.0</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>All Types</td>
<td>790.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Table: 4.10.

Particular of Land Resource among Sample Hmar: 2007-08, Cachar, Assam (In Acreages and Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Acreages</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Cultivated Land</td>
<td>300.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Uncultivated Land</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Land Under Cultivation (Without Irrigation)</td>
<td>220.0</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Land Under Irrigation</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All Land Types</td>
<td>790.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey
In total, the sample Hmar villages have 790 acreages of land. Out of 790 acreages, private individual land is only 155 (19.6 percent) acreages of land. The communal land has occupied about 360 (45.6 percent) acreages of the total land and the forest land covers 275 (34.8 percent) acreages of the total land. It indicates that most of the Hmar sample villages are situated in communal land and forest land.

Out of 790.0 acreages of land, about 300.0 (38.0 percent) is cultivable land and more than 192 (24.3 percent) acreages of land is found uncultivable. Land under cultivation occupies 22. (28.8 percent) acreages but irrigated land accounted only 78 (9.9 percent) acreages of the total land owned by the Hmar.

In our survey, the percentage covered by irrigation is less because nearly 80 percent of the total land is under communal and forest land. All the communal land and forest land held by the Hmars are located in the hill slopes where irrigation is not possible as we found in plain land.

Table: 4.11
Size of Land Holdings by Individual Sample Hmar Household in Cachar (Assam): 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Size-Class of Land Holdings (in Acreage)</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Marginal Land (Acreage below 2.3)</td>
<td>138.0</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Small Land (Acreage 2.6 to 5.0)</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Semi Medium Land (Acreage 5.2 to 9.9)</td>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Unclassified Acreage size-class</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All Land size-classes</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data from Field Survey

The table shows the size of land holdings by an individual Hmar household in south Assam. Out of 250 sample households, about 138 (55.2 percent) households are under the category of marginal land having less than 2.3 acreage of land. It is also found that about 19 (7.6 percent) of Hmar sample households are small land holdings which have land in between 2.6 acreage to 5.0 acreage, only 1 (0.4 percent) household belong to the semi medium land who has land 5.2 acreage to 9.9 acreage.
There are also 92 (36.8 percent) Hmar households who belong to the unclassified category of land. The unclassified households mainly belong to communal land and forest land so we cannot classify the size own by those households. The above data suggest that, most of the Hmar households in south Assam are under marginal and small land holdings.

Table: 4.12
Number of Hmar Sample Household in Cachar (Assam): Size Class-of-land-holdings-wise: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Size-Class of Land Holdings</th>
<th>Total Amount of Land (In Acreage)</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Marginal Land Acreage</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>138.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Small Land Acreage</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Semi Medium Land Acreage</td>
<td>06.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Unclassified Land Acreage</td>
<td>635.0</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All Land Acreage Size-Classes</td>
<td>790.0</td>
<td>250.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Our sample survey reveals that out of 250 sample households, 138 households are in marginal land class sharing only 110 acres of land. The other 19 households have 39 acres of land and belong to small land class. Only 1 sample household belong to semi medium land having 6 acres of land. Here, about 92 households are unclassified without having private individual land and all these groups of households belong to communal land.

4.3. Methods of Cultivation: Jhum and Grazing

A majority of Hmar subsistence farmers are Jhumias (slash burn type of rotational cultivators) by occupation. Over a large unit area of jungle for cultivation, the vegetation is felled in the months of January to February and is burnt in March. In shifting cultivation, seeds are sown in the burnt up vegetation ashes in the month of April and these are harvested in the winter months of November to December. Normally, a jhum plot is left fallow for five to ten years before it is cultivated again. This is a standard cultivation practice among the tribes of Hmar till date (Pakhuongte, 1983, p.20-21). In the occupation of shifting cultivation, Hmar
households grow rice, maize beans, ginger, cucumber, vegetables, cotton sugarcane and various seasonal fruits.

In spite of primitiveness and less profitable, shifting cultivation occupies an important place in the Hmar economy due to the following reasons.

a) Majority of the Hmar peoples inhabit the hill tops and slopes under jhum land permission and forest reserved land and find the available land on the slopes in close proximity to them for exploitation. They have less contact with outside world and suffer from ignorance of alternative means of gainful employment that may be available to them. So, their ignorance forced them to practice the traditional shifting cultivation even though it is not profitable.

b) Secondly, the scarcity and high prices of land in the plains in relation to demand forced the Hmar tribe to practice their traditional shifting cultivation. Besides this, it is also difficult for them to manage large funds for purchasing bullocks, fertilizers, seeds and other agricultural implements which are necessary for settle cultivation.

a) Thirdly, in settle cultivation, there is no scope for mixed cropping pattern. But in shifting cultivation, they can produce different items like rice, turmeric, ginger and vegetables at a time.

b) Lastly, in shifting cultivation, all the members of the household -the father, mother, and children can work together. In this type of occupation family members constitute a unit of production.

In shifting cultivation, the Hmar use very simple tools, like hoe, axe, spade, bamboo made basket for production process. We name ‘shifting’ because the Hmar people change the cultivated area year after year without rotating the crops. All the sample villages have shifting cultivation at least one of their occupation.
The second important occupation of the Hmar is shifting cultivator-cum-livestock rearer. These Hmars may be identified as grazers. Some of the Hmar sample households are engaged in both shifting cultivator at the same time they look after livestock and cattle. Livestock and cattle rearing contribute an important part of the Hmar agricultural economy. It not only assists them in various agricultural operations, but also provides basic inputs in the form of organic manure and basic source of meat and protein. It is also a means for earning cash income for villagers as the demand for animals and poultry products has increased and market facilities for selling the product have also emerged. It can be treated as an important asset for the Hmar community. The animals reared are pigs, oxen, cows, goats, poultry etc.

Table: 4.13

Particulars of Livestock and Cattle of the Hmar Sample Household:
2007-08, (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Name of Villages</th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Oxen</th>
<th>Pigs</th>
<th>Goats</th>
<th>Ducks</th>
<th>Poultry</th>
<th>Number of Household not having Livestock and Cattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hmarkhawlien</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Digger Fulartal</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Budon</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Muoltluong</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kumbha</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Muoldam</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ngaiban Ramthar</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Dolakhal</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Jurkhal</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Hebron</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Saisel</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Saron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Baliswar</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Moinathol</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Tupidhor</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Noksa</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Silchar Town</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>All Villages</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

It is found that out of 250 sample households from 17 Hmar villages in Cachar district, about 34 Hmar households have no livestock and cattle rearing. Silchar town
is totally absent, because all the Hmar households are residing in rented house and quarters which is not convenient for livestock and cattle rearing. The remaining Hmar villages have a total of 65 cows, 71 oxen, 182 pigs, 28 goats, 788 poultry and only 3 ducks are found in Saron village and no ducks is found in other sample villages. All these particular of livestock are important for the Hmar economy. It is an asset for the Household. In time of financial crisis, they sell livestock and cattle to fill the gap of their income especially during the time of Christmas and New Year celebration.

In our study, we mean horticulture marketeer to those Hmars who are engaged in Pine-Apple cultivation, Orange cultivation etc. and sell in the local markets. The sample villages like Dolakhal, Hmarkhawlien and Hebron village are engaged in such type of occupation. The village named Hmarkhawlien in Cachar district is very famous for Pine-Apple production. Marketing of horticulture products is a source of livelihood. In our study, we mean private/government service job holders to those Hmar households who are engaged in both private and government service for their livelihood. In this type of occupation, only few household members are engaged as main occupation. Though the Hmars prefer service to other occupations, it needs high qualification which is very insignificance among the Hmar tribe of south Assam.

In our sample study of Hmar household in south Assam, we found that production method in jhum cultivations is very simple. The Hmar sample households do not use any kind of scientific method of cultivation like tractors, tilling machines, fertilizers etc. which is use by other advanced communities. In jhum cultivations, we found that the Hmar people use a very simple tools like- dau, knife, hoe, axe, spade and baskets made of bamboo or cane.

Though jhum cultivation is regarded as traditional and unprofitable method of production, but majority of the sample Hmar practice jhum cultivations. In our field work, we found that at least 140 Hmar sample household are engaged in this type of cultivation. It is a form of agriculture in which the cultivated or cropped area is shifted regularly to allow soil properties to recover under conditions of natural successive stages of re-growth. In jhum cultivation system, at any particular point of
time a minority of fields is in cultivation and a majority are in various stages of natural re-growth. Over time, fields are cultivated for a relatively short time, and allowed to recover, or are fallowed, for a relatively long time. Eventually a previously cultivated field will be cleared of the natural vegetation and planted in crops again. Fields in established and stable shifting cultivation systems are cultivated and fallowed cyclically. This type of farming is also called shifting cultivation.

In the beginning of every year, the village headman and his elder open a large region of land for the year’s cultivation. In south Assam, the season usually begins in January and the man selects a tract of land for cultivation. After selecting a land, they cut all the bamboos and small trees within the tract of land. When the bamboos and trees are completely dried they set fire to it. The ground is not only cleared but manure by the ashes at the same time. Timbers which are not burned are gathered and burned again or carried to the side of the land for rough fences to keep the beasts out. On the first sign of rain, the Jhumias goes to the jhum with a small bag of seeds slung over their shoulder. They also have a small hoe in their hands. Form the lower end of the jhum, they digs little holes with the hoe and drops a few grains of rice in each hole. The sowing of seeds is done in a great speed. Very often the whole village joins together in a corporate labor. In our sample survey, we find that the Hmar people go from one jhum to other sowing from five to six fields a day. The corporate labor is called ‘Khuonglawm’ by the sample Hmar of south Assam.

In jhum cultivation, the main production is rice. The Hmar peoples of south Assam grow all kinds of vegetables including cucumber, watermelon, melon, beans, yams, potatoes, red chili and corn. The jhum is good only for one year, and the next year the cultivator starts all over again in another region. In jhum cultivation all the members of the households, the father mother and the children forms the unit of production. In jhum cultivation, production involves the use of only land and labor. Since it is a labor intensive method of production, it requires large amount of labor in course of cultivation though it is not profitable. Symbolically, we may conceive the cultivation methods as a function of resources of Land and Labor

\[ C_M = f (L, L_B) \]
C_M indicates jhum production and L refers to amount of land and L_B is the amount of labor used in jhum cultivation.

In our sample study, we found that jhum cultivation is practiced by all the Hmar who are residing in communal land (jhum land allotted by the government to the headman) and those Hmars inhabited in forest land. The size of land use by individual household for jhum cultivation is difficult to measure since the land belong to the whole villages. But, approximately it will be at least half acreage of land. Since it is a labor intensive method of production, it requires huge amount of labor in the process of production. Many of the sample households hire labor for payment of wages in daily basis. We have also collected information to pure Jhumias of our sample on the average amount spend for hiring labor for jhum cultivation.

In our sample, we found that out of 250 households 110 (44 percent) household do not have any expenditure for hiring labor for jhum cultivation. It means that, the entire sample households do not have jhum cultivation. Some households are in service job and some are in mixed agriculture. As it was mentioned in the earlier section only 140 households are pure Jhumias. We have also found that, about 10 households (4 percent) have expenditure below rupees 1,000.00 and the other 35 households (14 percent) have expenditure of rupees 1,000.00 to 5,000.00.

Table: 4.14

Average Annual Expenditure on Hiring Labor by the Sample Hmar Household for Jhum Cultivation: 2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Annual Expenditure for Hiring Labor in Jhum Cultivation (in Rupees)</th>
<th>Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>00.00</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1,000.00 (below)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>04.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1,001.00 to 5,000.00</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>5,001.00 to 10,000.00</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>10,001.00 to 15,000.00</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>15,001.00 to 20,000.00</td>
<td>08.0</td>
<td>03.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>20,001.00 (above)</td>
<td>04.0</td>
<td>01.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>All Expenditure Size-Class</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey
There are also about 38 households (15.2 percent) who have spend rupees 5,001.00 to 10,000.00 annually for hiring labor in jhum cultivation and another 45 (18.0 percent) households have rupees 10,001.00 to 15,000.00 annual expenditure on jhum cultivation. We have also found that about 8 (3.2 percent) households also have annual expenditure of rupees 15,001.00 to 20,000.00 for hiring labor and another 4 (1.6 percent) households have also expenditure more than 20,001.00 for labor hiring. Our data suggest that though jhum cultivation is not much profitable occupation, but it requires huge amount of expenditure for labor wages.

In short, we may say that the Hmar sample household used a very simple method in the production process especially in jhum cultivation. Moreover it also requires huge amount of labor which is very expensive and production is low. The low level of production in jhum cultivation due to poor method of production and the large participation of sample Hmar households is regarded as one of their economic backwardness. Due to low level of return in jhum cultivation same sample households are engaged in grazing as a secondary occupation.

4.4. Income and Savings

In our study, household savings and income are the measure of the combined savings and incomes of all the people sharing a particular household or place of residence. It includes every form of savings and incomes of the Hmar sample households. Generally, we find that

\[
\text{Income} = \text{Consumption} + \text{Savings} \\
\text{Savings} = \text{Income} - \text{Consumption}
\]

However, we do not adopt this method in our studies because the Hmar sample households do not maintain any written record on their income, savings and consumption expenditure. Here, we adopt direct oral interview to obtain information
on income and savings. The data may have some limitations because it is a recall method and the respondents have some quarries from the memory.

The economic wellbeing of a household is judged by their total incomes. The size of total income and savings of the household depends upon the number of earning members. It is, however, incorrect to say that larger the number of earning members in the households, greater is the size of income because, if the income per member on an average is less, the total income of the household will also be less. But, even under these situations, the households having larger number of earning members do enjoy a better life as compared to those having one or two earning members. Hence, in order to examine the economic background of the Hmar households, information about earning members in their households was collected during field investigation.

Table: 4.15

Number of Earning Members in the Hmar Sample Households:
2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Number of Earning Members in the Household</th>
<th>Total Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>111.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Five or More</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All Numbers in the Household</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Out of 250 sample households, about 13.2 percent of Hmar households are having only one earning member in the household and about 44.4 percents are having two earning members in the households. The other 20 percents households and 10.8 percents households have three and four earning members respectively. Only 11.6 percent of the Hmar households have five or more earning members in the households.

The horizontal axis shows the number of earning members in the Hmar households and the vertical axis shows percentage to the total households. The figure shows that
two earning members have the highest percentage in the Hmar sample households. There are also 20 percent three earning members which occupied a significant place.

Figure: 4.3.

Numbers of Earning Members in the Hmar Sample Households in Cachar (Assam): 2007-08

Source: Adapted from Table: 4.15.

In the Hmar economy, the figure suggest that there are 13.2 percent one earning members, 11.6 percent five or more earning members and only 10.8 percent have 10.8 percent earning members in the households. It means that majority of the Hmar people have two earning members in the households.
It is thus very clear that majority of the Hmar households have two or three earning members. But it is to be remembered that the larger number of earning members in the tribal households does not always lead to higher income of the households. The number of earning members is high mainly due to large participation in shifting cultivation which requires large numbers of labor but less income. The following table 4.16 shows the annual average income of the Hmar households.

Table: 4.16
Average Annual Income of Sample Hmar Households in Cachar, Assam: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Income Size Group</th>
<th>Annual Income (in rupees)</th>
<th>Total Number of Households</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Very Low Income Group</td>
<td>12,000 to 72,000</td>
<td>124.0</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Low Income Group</td>
<td>72,001 to 14,4000</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Middle Income Group</td>
<td>14,4001 to 21,6000</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Considerable Income Group</td>
<td>21,6001 to 25,2000</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>All Income Groups</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Out of 250 sample size, 124 (49.6 percent) households have annual income of rupees 12,000 to rupees 72,000 only and belong to very low income group. About 64 (25.6 percent) of the Hmar households have an annual income ranges from rupees 72,001 to rupees 14,4000 and they are under low income group category and 35 (14.0 percent) Hmar households have an annual income of rupees 14,4001 to rupees 21,6000 and they belong to middle income group. Only about 27 (10.8 percent) household have a considerable annual income of rupees 21, 6001 to rupees 25, 000. It is found that majority of the sample households belong to very low income group and low income group.
Savings

Though saving occupies a very important place in modern economy. But we find in our sample study that due to the low level of income, majority of the Hmar household cannot save. It is only those Hmar sample households who have government service job holder in the family have savings. Their savings are in terms of life insurance corporation (LIC) and a small percentage of households have also savings in the bank.

Table: 4.17.

Average Annual Savings of the Hmar Sample Household in Cachar, Assam: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Amount of Savings (in rupees)</th>
<th>Total Amount of Annual Savings (in rupees)</th>
<th>Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage to the Total Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Zero Savings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>153.0</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1,200.0 to 6,000.0</td>
<td>132,000.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>6,001.0 to 12,000.0</td>
<td>161,500.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>12,001.0 to 18,000.0</td>
<td>285,000.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>18,001.0 to 24,000.0</td>
<td>336,000.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>24,001.0 to 30,000.0</td>
<td>108,000.0</td>
<td>04.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>30,001.0 to 36,000.0</td>
<td>204,000.0</td>
<td>06.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>All Amount</td>
<td>1,226,500.0</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Out of 250 samples households, a total of only 97 (30.8 percent) households have savings in terms of Life Insurance and the remaining 153 (61.2 percent) Hmar households have no savings deposits. It is also found that about 33 (13.2 percent) households have annual savings of rupees.1,200.0 to rupees.6,000.0 only and 19 (7.6 percent) households have savings ranges from rupees.6,001.0 to rupees.12,000.0 only and another 19 (7.6 percent) have savings in between rupees.12,001.0 to rupees.18,000.0. There are also 16 (6.4 percent) households who have savings in between rupees.18, 001.0 to rupees.24, 000.0 and another only 4 (1.6 percent) households have savings in between rupees.24, 001.0 to rupees.30, 000.0. There are
also 6 (2.4 percent) households who have annual savings between rupees.30, 001.0 to rupees.36000.0. Further no Hmar households were found who have annual savings more than rupees. 36,000.0. If we looked to the savings of the Hmar households, about 61.2 percent have no savings, and the amount of savings of the remaining households are also very low which is one of the main reason of their economic backwardness.

Figure: 4.4

Average Annual Savings of the Hmar Sample Households in Cachar, Assam: 2007-08

Source: Adapted from Table 4.17.
Notes: All the savings of the Hmar sample households are not equal and therefore a numbers of categories exist. To avoid confusion, the average annual savings of people is taken as a group belongs to rupees 1,200 to 6,000, rupees 6,001 to 12,000, rupees 12,001 to rupees 18,000, 18,001 to 24,000, rupees 24,001 to 30,000 and rupees 30,001 to 36,000.
Among the Hmar sample household in south Assam we found that more than 61 percent are without any saving. Majority of the households who have savings are also only rupees 1200.00 to 6000.00 annually which indicates their economic backwardness. In the words of Saxena, the tribal economy was characterized by disinvestment; there are no savings to fall back upon in lean years (Saxena, 1964).

In the light of the facts regarding occupational choice of Hmar tribal households discussed in the earlier section, it was clear that the agricultural method of production of crops, horticulture and livestock products practices are not economically modern, improved and efficient ones. The surplus generated are bound to be low, given the low level of productivity and yield and large level of wastages of resources associated with the shifting cultivation and individualized private forces cultivation and livestock rearing. In the backdrop of low surplus but fixed quantity of family consumption, the savings are either zero or sometimes negative (as we find it in the pattern and structure of credit, discussed as next theme). These two facts of traditional methods of production and abysmally low overall savings are evident determinants of backwardness of Hmar tribe in the sample area. In other words, economic backwardness is conceived in terms of proxy variables of inefficient technique of crop cultivation and livestock rearing and low capacity to generate surplus and savings of the household. In the next chapter, we regress the savings as proxy of backwardness in our savings regression model.

4.5. Credit and Indebtedness

There are numerous problems that the Hmar tribe is facing today. Economic crisis and poverty come to the forefront. It is through the traditional money lending system that the Hmar are greatly exploited. Money lending leads to a number of evil effects. The moneylender forces the loaned to a bonded labor. Though, numbers of measure have been taken in the recent past, it is still existing in a number of forms. The role of co-operative banks in the tribal areas particularly the Hmar in habitats areas is still insignificant. The extent of other institutional finance is rather meager considering the demand. As these are advanced only for productive purposes and not to meet
obligations, there always remain a number of occasions when the Hmar tribals are forced to take loans from these moneylenders. Besides, meeting the various formalities to get the institutional loans becomes impossible for them. As the moneylenders readily offer loans without any elaborate formality and at very short notice, the dependence on them by the Hmar is still very much there.

For stimulating the tempo of production, they need timely credit for purchasing seed, manure, food, payment of wages and maintenances during cultivations period, with a low rate of interest. In order to meet all these expenses, government of India has set up NABARD, commercial banks, rural banks, cooperative banks etc. to provide loans for the farmers. But, all these financial institutions have failed to provide loans to the Hmar sample households in south Assam and all these financial institutions are not available in the Hmar dominated area. Even though if available, security is required for taking loans.

Table: 4.18.

Annual Indebtedness among Sample Hmar Household in Cachar, Assam: 2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Size-Class of Amount of Borrowings (In Rupees)</th>
<th>Source of Borrowings</th>
<th>Total Number of Household Borrowing from all sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rupees Zero</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Below 1,000.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>06.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1,000.0 to 15,000.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>15,001.0 to 30,000.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>03.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>30,001.0 to 45,000.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>45,001.0 to 60,000.0</td>
<td>07.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>60,001.0 and Above</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>All (1 to 7)</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

There is a question whether the Hmar people, who have no individual land documents in their name and are just residing in community owned land can avail such facilities? So due to absence of institutional credit in the Hmar areas, they
cannot improve their traditional agriculture. Consequently, their small amount of production in agriculture cannot meet their requirements and large number of farmers falls into the clutches of money lender.

Out of 250 sample sizes of the Hmar households, 144 households (above 57.6 percent) fall under indebtedness. The main sources of borrowings are banks, money lenders or traders who lend money for interest, and relatives and friends. We found that a total of 12.4 percent of credits is borrowed from financial institutions, and another 28.8 percents of the Hmar credits is borrowed from private money lenders or traders and only 16.4 percent of credit is boned by their own relatives or friends in cash or in kind. In our sample, about 106 households have no credit. But it does not mean that they have a better economic position, generally they are poor households and no one is willing to provide them. Normally in Cachar district, moneylenders charge 10 percent rate of interest per month, whereas in Banks, 12.6 percent per annum, and no interest is charged by relatives and friends.

In south Assam, a number of Hmar households appear to be indebted. The most important reason of their indebtedness appears to be their dependence on the primitive agricultural system and the low level of economic operations. The subsistence type of agriculture mostly depends on rainfall, poor conditions of soil; primitive methods of cultivation. Besides these, absence of gainful employment opportunities in the Hmar areas is responsible for indebtedness. Their wasteful customs of marriage, death and religions, which are generally beyond their means, further aggravate the deficit nature of their economy and compel them to borrow. Even after the introduction of different financial institutions in many parts of Cachar district, still the non-institutional sources play an important role in the Hmar economy and about 28.8 percent of borrowings come from the contribution of private money lender. Four points are worth attention:

a) Most of the Hmar villages are located under communal land with no individual right for land ownership. The land documents are absent in case of Hmars residing in community land. This makes them ineligible to seek loans from formal source. The only alternative sources they have are money lenders,
traders, who provide credit without security. The money lenders accept repayment in kind and allow flexibility in repayment schedule.

b) Out of 250 sample sizes of Hmar households (57.6 percent) are indebted. But it does not mean that the remaining 42.4 percent of Hmar households enjoy better economic position. Most of them are so that poor and the private money lenders or traders do not trust for lending them money. They live down to earth life, at the verge of pursy line.

c) All the Hmar households who have borrowed from financial institutions i.e. 12.4 percent are mostly government service holders. They availed loans mainly from State Bank India, Silchar Branch on monthly deduction from their salary.

d) The households who have borrowed up to Rupees.15000 are mainly cultivators. They utilized the borrowed money in purchasing food, educations, agricultural inputs and health-sustaining agents. The Hmar households who have has Rupees.30, 001 and above borrowings mainly utilize for construction and they are mainly belongs to government employees.

Though, institutional credits with low rate of interest are important for economic development, but still, they are insufficient in the tribal areas of the district and as such a large number of families fall under the clutches of private money lenders. Due to low level of income and savings, numbers of households do not have security which is required for borrowing in the formal financial institution and they run after informal source of credit like private money lender who charges a very high rate of interest. The low level of savings is one of the main reasons of their economic backwardness.

The role of moneylender has been considerably declined in the national level due to the development of financial institutions especially after 1991. For instance, in 1971 money lender contributed 36 percent of the rural household, but in 1991 it has declined to 17.6 percents (Datt and Sundaram, 2004, p.601). But if we look at the
Hmar economy, moneylender alone contributed above 28.8 percents and the interest charge is normally 96 percents to 120 percents annually. The indebtedness among the Hmars is a symptom of economic backwardness. At the household level, it is indicative of poverty of an imbalance between income and minimum consumption requirements as well as lack of resource for carrying gainful activity and employment. The moneylenders lend money to the Hmar peoples even without securities and accept repayment in kind and cash and allow flexibility in repayment schedule. Thus, the absence of convenient financial institutions among the Hmar society in south Assam is considered as one of the determinants of their economic backwardness.

4.6. Entrepreneurship and Livelihood

In our study, we mean by an entrepreneur that Hmar individual who starts his own business for his livelihood. An entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of the area of lower production to higher productivity for greater yield. The success of such an entrepreneur depends upon the imagination, vision and innovation, risk-taking etc. In our sample, we find only 15 (6.0 percent) households are engaged in business enterprise. But the nature of business practice is very small; they are engaged in cloth merchants, tea stall, vegetables selling etc. The small number of participation rate of the Hmar in the entrepreneurship is mainly due to lack of proper infrastructure in the Hmar villages, lack of proper education. The Hmar dominated area of south Assam are mainly situated in the interior hill slopes and less scope for setting up handloom industry, handicraft in absence of proper transportation. In this section, we dealt with the service, education and infrastructure which are responsible for lack of entrepreneurship among the Hmar of south Assam.

Service sector job is more preferred to other occupations by most of the Hmar even in the traditional society though it needs a sufficient educational qualification which was absent in the traditional society. But now, a total of 43 Hmar (17.2 percent) households are found earning their livelihood in service sector. They are engaged as primary school teachers, middle school teacher, high school teachers, office clerks,
fourth grade employee and few of them are also engaged in high government post like lecturers, state civil service etc. There are also some Hmar households who are engaged in service sector as subsidiary occupation. There are some reasons of the increasing trend of the Hmar people in service sector. Originally the Hmars are animistic (worshiper of nature). When they were converted into Christianity, some mission schools and offices were set up in the Hmar villages and numbers of them were employed as teachers, pastors, office assistant and fourth grades staff. In 1969, the government of Assam introduced the Hmar language as a medium of instruction up to primary and middle school level. Government Hmar medium primary schools were established in almost every Hmar village. All the posts of primary teacher were occupied by the Hmars only. Lastly, in this study, the Hmar families of Silchar town who have migrated from different districts and states are only for government services are included in the sample sizes. So, the percentage of service is comparatively high.

**Education and Entrepreneurship**

There is absence of entrepreneurial skill among the sample Hmar, and these are multiple reasons for it. We study below two important factors responsible for scarcity of entrepreneurship among Hmar tribe, though these two features are common to all population in Assam: lack of education and lack of infrastructure.

Lack of education is the reason for lack of entrepreneurship. Low educated/ skilled Hmar cannot enter a big business and cannot take high risk. During the time of field work, primary data of educational level of the Hmar was collected so as to highlight their economic backwardness in terms of education which is also responsible for lack of entrepreneurship.

Out of 250 Hmar households, there are 1879 members in south Assam. Out of that, about 30.2 percents of the Hmar are just literate and about 33.3 percents of the Hmar are illiterate. The literacy rate is comparatively high because of the fact the Hmar tribe was earlier in contact with the British missionaries who has taught them read
and write which is essential for reading Bible in worship service. But if we look into the educational level, highly qualified persons are rare among the Hmar tribe in Cachar district. We find that about 13.7 percent of them are in primary level, i.e. 69 males and 53 females are primary school student and 55 male and 79 female had left their studies after primary school. About 8.0 percent have completed up to middle school, among them 35 males and 24 females are still continuing their studies whereas 45 males and 48 females had left their studies after middle school.

Table: 4.19

Level of Education among the Hmar Sample Household:
2007-08 (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Continuing</th>
<th>Discontinued</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>568 (30.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Just Literate</td>
<td>143.0</td>
<td>112.0</td>
<td>625 (33.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>256 (13.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>152 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>H.S.L.C</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>150 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>80 (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>07.0</td>
<td>42 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Post-Graduate</td>
<td>03.0</td>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>06 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>All Levels</td>
<td>330.0</td>
<td>243.0</td>
<td>1879 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

The above data further reveal that, the percentage of the educational level of the Hmar from H.S.L.C. onwards started declining, i.e. only 8.0 percent have reached up to HSLC level, only 4.3 percents up to Higher Secondary level, only about 2.2 percent up to graduate level and the percentage of Hmar who have completed up to Post-Graduate level was only 0.3.

The data suggest that, majority of the Hmar populations are educated up to middle class but highly educated persons are relatively low. Due to their poor economic condition, many persons left their studies before matriculation and the percentage of highly educated persons is relatively low. Due to the low level of highly educated
persons, large number of them cannot engage in service and they are bound to depend on their traditional occupation with low economic strata.

In our sample, no Hmar household member has ever gone through any training programme or vocational education programme, run by the state of Assam. Small entrepreneurship and skill development training programme are run by the Ministry of Industry, Government of Assam at Guwahati and Jorhat, but no Hmar has joined till today. We found that, just literacy percentage is very high in the Hmar society (only people who can read and write) and full illiterate is very low.

But, if we look into the level of education the diagram shows that primary level is highest and middle and HSLC level is almost same. After matriculation onwards the percentage comes down and in post graduate level the percentage is more insignificant. It means that in Hmar society the percentage of enrolment in higher education level is very less which is also regarded as one of their economic backwardness. If the percentage of enrolment in higher education is high, we expected that their economy will rise by occupying a better employment.

**Lack of Proper Infrastructure**

Given the fact of involvement of a small minority of Hmar household members in petty business, fourth grade employee, vocation, etc which bespeaks of very low entrepreneurial skill and nor relevant education, the lack of entrepreneurship is also because of lack of conducive and favorable theme-setting or societal level.

At the aggregate level, the poor infrastructure is also responsible for lack of entrepreneurship, which in turn is the determinant of backwardness of the Hmar tribe.

During field work, the respondents were asked about main obstacle of development in their life. Most of the respondents replied that their economic backwardness was due to lack of proper infrastructure.
Out of 16 Hmar villages and 1 town (Silchar town), electricity is available only in Silchar town, Hmarkhawlien village and Digar village. In the remaining 14 villages, electric current is totally absent and few families who have government service in the households are using solar light and majority of them are using kerosene lamp.

Transportation and communication is more or less better in Hmarkhawlien and Digar villages because National Highway-53 is passing their village from Silchar to Jiribam and for these two Hmar villages’, transportation and communications is not much a problem but the remaining 14 villages are located in the interior hill slopes.
and transportation is the biggest problem. Most of the villages are situated more than 8 kilometres to 10 kilometres from the main road. Transportation of agricultural product from their villages to the nearest markets is done by human labor and no vehicle is available. Consequently, they do not produce much for the market due to transportation problem. Lack of proper infrastructure, especially electric current, transport and communication are one of the main causes of their economic backwardness and low level of entrepreneurship among the Hmar. We have furnished a table in the third chapter showing the distance of sample villages where the researcher has travelled and observed the bad condition of road network.

**Remarks**

The households of the Hmar tribe of south Assam are characterized by large number of nuclear families and a small percentage of joint families. Normally they do not have a single family. A majority of the Hmar are depending on agriculture for their livelihood. The most common type of agriculture practice is shifting cultivation in the hills. In which scientific method of production like tractors, tilling machine, pump sets etc are not applicable. They used only simple tools like dau, knife, hao, and spade etc for cultivation. It is evident that our first hypothesis is true. They also practice livestock rearing and marketing of horticulture like the other tribes. At the same time they are also engaged in different occupation like private/government service job in government institution and mission school. Small numbers of households are also engaged in hawkers-cum retailers-cum-cloth sellers. The size of land holding also indicates their economic backwardness. Majority of the Hmar are marginal farmers holding a very insignificance size of land.

In our study, we find that income of the Hmar is very low which is not sufficient for savings. The low level of income is mainly due to traditional occupations which results in low savings. The low level of income and savings among the Hmar tribe of south Assam is one of the determinants of backwardness. In most of the cases their annual income is not sufficient for savings. Only government employees among the sample Hmar households of south Assam have savings in terms of Life Insurance
Corporation (LIC). They are therefore dependent upon credit. The study also found that, maximum credit requirements of Hmar sample household comes from private money lender and only a small requirements of credit is bone by financial institution. It is true that our second hypotheses that credit facilities are still limited. Though interest charge is low in financial institutions, but requires security in terms of individual land documents, service documents which are not available to majority of the Hmar living in community owned land. It is also one of the main reasons of their economic backwardness. It is also evident that the Hmar tribes of south Assam are characterized by lack of entrepreneurship. Lack of entrepreneurship among the Hmar is mainly due to low level of education which results in lack of participation in vocational education. Besides these, poor infrastructure among the sample villages is also responsible for economic backwardness.

In the next chapter we undertake the regression analysis in an attempt to further strengthen our findings of this chapter and to highlight the exact quantitative relationship between occupations of the Hmar tribe of south Assam with their income, savings size of land holdings, family size and literacy. Examination of this relationship may help us in identifying the determinants of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe of south Assam and go a long way in helping the policy maker.
Chapter – 5

Backwardness:
Search for Economic Determinants
In this chapter, we analyze again the primary quantitative data collected from 250 sample households of Hmar inhabited villages of Cachar in the year 2007-08. In the backdrop of the primary data based descriptive profile furnished in the last chapter, the statistical exercises using regression technique is advanced in this chapter. Our purpose is to verify the main factors which stand in the way of the Hmar economic backwardness. Income and savings are regressed on land and occupation. While we established our hypotheses regarding the inefficient methods of production, low level of savings and high incidence of indebtedness, and lack of entrepreneurship in the last chapter on the basis of simple arithmetic tools and techniques (average, percentage, summation), we attempt to estimate a number of regression coefficients and their statistical significances in this chapter. Such excercise helps in establishing the similar findings with statistical foundation.

We have systematized the contents of this chapter in terms of two models of household saving and income, whereby the monthly average income and monthly average savings of household are taken as two proxies of economic backwardness. The quantitative data on land, occupation types and savings are used as principal determining variables in the statistical exercises. There are in total 19 regression equations in these model, arranged through 23 statistical tables. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first and second section gives the background of economic determinants and regression models. The third section is income model, in which different occupations, land ownership and savings level of Hmar sample household are treated as determining independent variables. In the fourth section, we describe the savings model in which the average monthly savings of a Hmar sample household is the dependent economic variable. We put some analytical remarks at the last.

5.1. Backwardness and Determinants

In the literature of development economics, it is standard to define development as a process of continuous and sustained increase in income (in the case of country, the national income) combined with improvement in the system of institution and
structure in the economy. Income is a proxy measure of development whereby increase in income signifies development and decrease in income indicates lack of development or retardation. In a planned economy, the planners attempt to boost savings and investment to increase income, and therefore, attain fast rate of growth. In other words, income and savings are used as proxy to development. In the same manner, we have used low income and low savings as indicators of backwardness of a tribe.

Economic backwardness is conceived to be reflected in the life conditions of a laggard tribe. In a way, such laggardness is reflected in continuation of poor cultivation method, insignificance land holdings, low level of income and savings and lack of entrepreneurial ability, all sustained in the ethos of poor infrastructure. Within the limited framework of a tribe, that is, Hmar, in case of which there exists very few systematic study and quite limited information, these variables are taken to be determinants of economic backwardness. Since we cannot measure the cultivation method and entrepreneurial level in quantitative terms, our argument runs in terms of assertion that remunerative occupation of sample households leads to higher level of income and savings. The higher level of income and savings leads to less backwardness and vice-versa. The higher or lower level of income of income and savings depends on the type of occupations which they practice.

In this chapter, we attempt to find out: what those factors are that determine or leads to low income and low savings. We try to find out by resorting to regression analysis of income and savings only. In our regression exercises, we have also taken into account of the percentage of land owned by the Hmar sample household and average size of land owned, because land is also an important factor of production especially for those sample household who depend on agricultural occupation. The higher or lower productivity also depends on size of land owned. Higher productivity means higher income and thereby increases in savings. In short, we use the amount of monthly income and savings of different occupations and percentage and size of land owned by the sample household to search for reason of economic backwardness of the Hmar by using regression equation.
5.2. The Regression Models

It has been argued in the last chapter that economic backwardness of an ignored, neglected and marginalized small tribe like Hmar can be understood in terms of three factors: old, absolute and inefficient methods of production and practices of livelihood leading to low household and farm income, which in turn (after accounting for fixed family consumption) depresses the level of savings. The low income, in the absence of avenues of non-farm employment in rural handlooms, handicrafts and industries in south Assam, and low savings simply means that there are almost negligible surplus for investment and entrepreneurial activities among Hmar. We have established those empirical facts on the basis of field-survey-based-primary-data for the year 2007-08 in the last chapter.

We wish to strengthen our findings with the help of ordinary least square method of simple regression analysis in this chapter. The descriptive analysis in the last chapter have used the category of “annual” income and “annual” savings of a sample Hmar household whereas the estimate of “monthly” income and “monthly” savings are used for the purpose of calculating regression coefficients in the present chapter.

This method has been purposefully adopted and has its roots to the field survey. In course of field survey, our question to the respondent household was: what were your annual income and annual savings? The replies of the households were in terms of varying monthly income and varying monthly savings which the researcher aggregated to arrive at the annual figures. For the present purpose, the annual figures are divided by 12 to estimate the monthly figure, and then sum total of income and savings are arranged over 250 sample households respectively. The monthly average figures of income and savings are better variables, since the variations and fluctuations in income and savings across months of the year are controlled in the process of averaging these.

We are using two regression models: Income regression model and Savings regression model. Throughout the discussion of income regression model, the average monthly income of a sample household is the dependent variable and there
are six independent variables related with occupation, land and savings. In the savings regression model, the average monthly savings of a sample household is the dependent variable throughout, and there are eight independent variables related with occupation, land and savings. In total, the entire model building exercise (in the regression models) is based on two dependent and eight independent “economic variables”.

We use a simple regression equation of the type: \( Y = a + bX \), where, ‘a’ is the intercept (constant), ‘b’ is the slope (regression coefficient) of the regression line, ‘X’ is the independent variable and ‘Y’ is the dependent variable.

We also use an extended equation of the type: \( Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 \), where ‘a’ is the intercept (constant) and \( b_1 \), \( b_2 \) and \( b_3 \) are the three slopes (regression coefficients). In an extended model, there are three independent variables of \( X_1 \), \( X_2 \) and \( X_3 \). In case of multiple regression analysis, we are not only estimate F-value, t-value and R square but also check the statistical significance.

We use the following symbols for dependent variables in our regression equations: \( Y_{(H)} \) refers to monthly average income of the sample Hmar household, and \( S_{(H)} \) refers to the monthly average savings of the sample household (of Hmar tribe of Cachar district of southern region of Assam in 2007-08). In the income model, we have six independent variables and the following symbols are used for these:

- \( Y_A \) refer to the monthly average income from agricultural occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( Y_S \) refer to the monthly average income from service occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( Y_B \) refers to the monthly average income from business occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( L_O \) refer to the average size of owned land in a Hmar sample household (in acres);
- \( L_P \) refer to the percentage of private land owned by Hmar sample household (in percent); and
S_{(H)} \text{ refers to the monthly average savings in a Hmar sample household (in rupees).}

In the savings model, we have eight independent variables and the following symbols are used for these:

- \( S_A \) refers to the monthly average savings from agricultural occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( S_S \) refer to the monthly average savings from service occupation of the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( S_B \) refers to the monthly average savings from business occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( Y_A \) refer to the monthly average income from agricultural occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( Y_S \) refer to the monthly average income from service occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( Y_B \) refers to the monthly average income from business occupation in the Hmar sample household (in rupees);
- \( L_O \) refer to the average size of land owned in a Hmar sample household (in acreage); and,
- \( L_P \) refer to the percentage of private land owned by Hmar sample household (in percent)

In the following table, we present the results of regression exercises of the income and savings models. In the income model, we have six partial regression equations. From the three occupations of the Hmar household, only average income from service have come out statistically significant and the other two occupations namely, agriculture and business occupation are statistically insignificant.

Both the value of \( R^2 \) is low, the F-value and t-value are also insignificant. It indicates that, income from service plays a significant role in determining the level of monthly average income of the sample household. The monthly average savings also come
out statistically significant which signifies that saving is an important determinant of monthly average income.

Table: 5.1

Results of Regression Exercise: Income Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₐ</td>
<td>6316.01</td>
<td>0.08₃Yₐ</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₛ</td>
<td>2881.93</td>
<td>0.7₄₉Yₛ</td>
<td>0.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₜ</td>
<td>6377.60</td>
<td>0.₄2₀Yₜ</td>
<td>0.0₅₇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Sₜ(H)</td>
<td>4383.2₈</td>
<td>0.₈₆₄Sₜ(H)</td>
<td>0.₇₄₇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Lₚ</td>
<td>3₉₄₉.₄₂</td>
<td>0.₅₈₀Lₚ</td>
<td>0.₃₃₆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Lₒ</td>
<td>3₇₂₃.₈₉</td>
<td>0.₇₁₅Lₒ</td>
<td>0.₅₁₁</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 5.1. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₐ</td>
<td>0.1₁</td>
<td>2.₅₃</td>
<td>0.₃₂</td>
<td>0.₇₅₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₛ</td>
<td>1₉.₁₇</td>
<td>2.₅₈</td>
<td>4.₃₇</td>
<td>0.₀₀₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₜ</td>
<td>0.₉₁</td>
<td>5.₇₃</td>
<td>0.₉₅</td>
<td>0.₃₅₄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Sₜ(H)</td>
<td>₄₄.₂₅</td>
<td>7.₃₅</td>
<td>6.₆₅</td>
<td>0.₀₀₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Lₚ</td>
<td>7.₆₀</td>
<td>2.₅₉</td>
<td>2.₇₅</td>
<td>0.₀₁₅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Lₒ</td>
<td>1₅.₆₉</td>
<td>3.₅₇</td>
<td>3.₇₇</td>
<td>0.₀₀₁</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 5.2.

Results of Multiple Regressions: Income Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Yₐ + b₂Yₛ + b₃Yₜ</td>
<td>2₈₆₈.₇₀</td>
<td>(-) 0.₀₃₅₃Yₐ 0.₇₂₉Yₛ 0.₁₅₃₃Yₜ</td>
<td>0.₅₈₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Y(H) = a + b₁Lₚ + b₂Lₒ</td>
<td>3₈₆₈.₇₂</td>
<td>(-) 0.₁₀₄₄Lₚ 0.₈₀₃₃Lₒ</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the percentage of private land owned and average size of land owned by the sample household have positive sign in all the values, but the low level of R² do not
permit us to accept the equation. It indicated that, percentage and average size of land owned of the Hmar is not sufficient to raise the level of monthly average income of the household.

Table: 5.2.

(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>$Y_{(H)} = a+b_1 Y_A + b_2 Y_S + b_3 Y_B$</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>(-) 0.16</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>$Y_{(H)} = a+b_1 L_P + b_2 L_O$</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>(-) 0.29</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 5.3.

Results of Regressions Excercises: Savings Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b_1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 S_A$</td>
<td>269.29</td>
<td>0.459 $S_A$</td>
<td>0.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 S_S$</td>
<td>109.06</td>
<td>0.620 $S_S$</td>
<td>0.385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 S_B$</td>
<td>386.39</td>
<td>(-) 0.034 $S_B$</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 L_P$</td>
<td>(-) 5.42</td>
<td>0.586 $L_P$</td>
<td>0.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 L_O$</td>
<td>59.03</td>
<td>0.560 $L_O$</td>
<td>0.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 Y_A$</td>
<td>703.04</td>
<td>(-) 0.295 $Y_A$</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 Y_S$</td>
<td>(-) 18.33</td>
<td>0.583 $Y_S$</td>
<td>0.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a+b_1 Y_B$</td>
<td>4.470</td>
<td>(-) 0.078 $Y_B$</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the multiple regression income models, we have two equations in which we have combined all the monthly average income from the three occupations of the Hmar sample households. In a combined equations, we find that both the regression coefficient have a negative sign.

Though, $Y_S$ and $Y_B$ possess a positive sign and the value of $R^2$ is statistically significance, we cannot accept the first multiple regression equation because the
regression coefficient of $Y_A$ have not only a negative sign but the t-value of regression coefficient of $Y_A$ possess a negative sign.

Table: 5.3.

(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 S_A$</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 S_S$</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 S_B$</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>(-) 0.13</td>
<td>0.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 L_P$</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>(-) 0.03</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 L_Q$</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_A$</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>(-) 1.19</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_S$</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>(-) 0.11</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_B$</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>(-) 0.30</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contribution of $Y_A$ and $Y_B$ to the monthly average income of the household is insignificant. Though more than half of the sample households have agricultural occupation, but the regression equation reveals that income from agricultural occupation is very low. Among the three occupations of the sample households, we find that income from service occupation have the highest contribution to the monthly average income of the Hmar household in south Assam.

In a partial savings regression model, we have again eight equations in total. Out of these equations, only service from savings, income from service occupation and average size of land owned by sample household come out statistically significant.

It indicates that saving and income from service occupation have a dominant role in determining the monthly average saving of the Hmar sample households. Moreover, average size of land owned is also an important factor for determining the level of monthly average savings, but the percentage of private owned land is less and we cannot accept the equation.
The intercept (constant) value and the t-value of parameter possess a negative sign. In the partial regression savings equation, monthly average savings of service occupation have contributed higher amount of savings to the monthly average savings of the Hmar households of south Assam compare to other occupation, but still we cannot accepted statistically.

Table: 5.4.

Results of Multiple Regressions: Savings Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b₁, b₂, b₃</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁S_A + b₂S_S + b₃S_B )</td>
<td>3.042</td>
<td>0.372S_A, 0.605S_S, 0.094S_B</td>
<td>0.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁L_P + b₂L_O ) (-) 8.14</td>
<td>0.396L_P, 0.223L_O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁Y_A + b₂Y_S + b₃Y_B )</td>
<td>332.47 (-)</td>
<td>0.330Y_A, 0.600Y_S, 0.003Y_B</td>
<td>0.447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First, Second, Third</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁S_A + b₂S_S + b₃S_B )</td>
<td>5.15 0.02 1.92</td>
<td>3.01 0.46 0.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁L_P + b₂L_O ) (-) 8.14</td>
<td>0.39 0.22 (-) 0.357</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>( S(H) = a + b₁Y_A + b₂Y_S + b₃Y_B )</td>
<td>3.50 1.17 (-) 1.37</td>
<td>2.88 0.01 0.046</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a multiple savings regression model, the contributions of all occupation to the monthly average savings have come out statistically significant. All the values have possessed a positive sign and savings from service emerges as the highest regression coefficient out of the three occupations. In combining both the land particulars, the intercept (constant) values and the t-value of parameter become a negative sign so we cannot accept the equation for our case. In partial equation, average size of land owned possesses a positive sign and it was accepted. It is due to the low level of
percentage of private land owned by the sample household it become statistically insignificant in combine equation. The contribution of income from agricultural occupation, service and business occupation to the monthly average savings is not acceptable in combine equation. Since, the regression coefficient of agricultural occupation and the t-value of parameter have a negative sign.

Out of the three occupational practice of the Hmar sample households we find that only service occupation have acceptable amount of income. In agricultural occupation, though large number of Hmar sample household are engaged as main occupation but the contribution to the monthly average income is very insignificant and statistically unacceptable. It means that income earn from agriculture occupation is very low. In business, some of the Hmar people are also engaged as hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers; in such occupation the Hmar sample households have a very low income which is not sufficient for savings.

5.3. Income Regression Model

We have divided this section into three sub-sections, namely, occupation dependency, land dependency and savings dependency. In order to identify which occupations determine monthly average incomes, we run a regression model based on the primary data collected from field work. In short, we may write: $Y = f(O)$, where ‘$Y$’ means income and it is a dependent variable and ‘$O$’ means occupation and it is an independent variable and ‘$f$’ is the functional relationship. The increase or decrease in ‘$Y$’ depends on increase or decrease in income obtained from the type of ‘$O$’.

5.3.1. Occupation Determining Income

In this study, we have collected primary data on distribution of monthly average income and we find that the Hmar peoples of south Assam mainly practice three
types of occupations such as agriculture, service and business. Most of their income comes from these three occupations.

Agricultural Occupation

The first equation we introduce is the relationship between the monthly average income and income earned from agricultural occupation. Since, agriculture is one of the most important sources of income for the Hmar tribe in south Assam. To examine the contribution of agricultural occupation to the monthly average income of the Hmar people, we present a regression equation. The first equation is

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_A \]

\[ Y_{(H)} = 6316.01 + 0.083 Y_A \]

where, ‘\(Y_{(H)}\)’ refers to monthly average income of sample Hmar household and ‘\(Y_A\)’ represents the monthly average income of the Hmar sample household from agricultural occupation.

Table: 5.5.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Agricultural occupation as Independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Agricultural Occupation of a Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the equation reveals that, the equation is not acceptable on statistical grounds. \(R^2\) is almost zero indicating that absolutely no relationship between monthly average income from agriculture and the monthly average income. The F-Value is also insignificant. The coefficient of ‘\(Y_A\)’ not only posses a small value but
also statistically insignificant. It may be mentioned here that, though more people are engaged in agriculture, but it is not much benefited to the Hmar economy. Agriculture is practiced by the Hmar people due to lack of gainful employment opportunities. Agriculture may be treated as marginal occupation but not commercial.

Though, the practice of agriculture is not much beneficial for the Hmar people as it is revealed by the equation. Most of the Hmar families are having agriculture as one of their occupation either main or subsidiary. The common practice of agriculture is shifting (Jhum) cultivation.

Agriculture may be treated as one of the important occupation for the Hmar people but the contribution to the monthly average income is comparatively low. It is just a marginal one. The equation clearly reveals that, though large number of Hmar’s are depend on agriculture, but agriculture is not a profitable occupation for the Hmar people. Excessive dependence on agriculture occupation and low contribution of monthly average income is one of their economic backwardness.

Service Occupation

The Hmar people of south Assam are also engaged in various private/government services job for their livelihood. Next to agriculture, such type of service occupies a very important place in the Hmar economy of south Assam. To examine the contribution of service to the monthly average income of the Hmar people, we present a regression equation. The second equation represented by the equation is:

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_S \]
\[ Y_{(H)} = 2881.93 + 0.749Y_S \]

where, ‘\(Y_{(H)}\)’ represents monthly average income of the Hmar people and ‘\(Y_S\)’ represents the monthly average income from service of the Hmar household.
Testing the equation with the help of primary data reveals that there exist a positive relationship between monthly average income from service $Y_S$ of the Hmar people and monthly average income $Y_{(H)}$ of the Hmar people. Higher the level of monthly average income from service, higher the level of monthly average income in general. The equation is acceptable both on theoretical and statistical accounts. The coefficient of determination between monthly average income and monthly income from service is 56 percent as reveal by $R^2$.

Table: 5.6.
Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Service occupation as Independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Service Occupation of the Household</td>
<td>0.561</td>
<td>19.17</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This implies that monthly average income is strongly affected by monthly average income from service. The regression coefficients which is, as high as 0.749 posses the expected sign and is also statistically significant. Which indicate that, higher the level of monthly average income from service is, higher is the monthly average income in general. So the increase or decrease of service holders job in the Hmar economy leads to an increase or decrease in the monthly average income.

Though the equation reflects a positive trend, and we find that the average income from service has a high contribution to the monthly average income of the Hmar people. But service requires highly qualified person which is very rare in case of the sample household of Hmar tribe of south Assam. The statistical validity of the model prompts us to conclude that the level of income from service has a strong influence in determining the monthly average income of the Hmar tribe.
**Business Occupation**

Business is also one of the important occupations for some section of the Hmar people living in South-Assam. The practice of business is not very much common among the Hmar people but some people are engaged in cloth merchants, groceries, tea stall and selling of their agricultural product in the local market which we called them hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers in chapter-4. To examine the contribution of business to the monthly average income, we used the regression equation as follows:

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_B \]
\[ Y_{(H)} = 6377.60 + 0.240Y_B \]

Where, ‘\( Y_{(H)} \)’ represents monthly average income of the Hmar people and ‘\( Y_B \)’ represents the monthly average income from business occupation of the Hmar household.

**Table: 5.7.**

**Regression Analysis Result:**
Monthly Average income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Business occupation as Independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Business Occupation of a Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>0.354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated result reveal that the explanatory power of the variable goes down as \( R^2 \) is now only 0.057. The coefficient of the independent variable not only possesses a low value, but also statistically insignificant. In this equation, the F-value and the t-value are also statistically insignificant. Hence the equation is unacceptable and we may say that monthly average income from business plays insignificant role in determining the monthly average income of the Hmar people.
In our analysis it is thus revealed that monthly average income from business do not have a strong influence in the monthly average income of the Hmar people. Among the three common occupational practiced of the Hmar people income from service is satisfactory as well as from our estimation of primary data. It may be mentioned here that the Hmar people are not very much familiar with business. It may be mentioned here that, still now the Hmar people did not change much about their traditional occupation of agriculture and they have less interest in business.

**All Three Occupations Together**

The rationale for inclusion of these factors for analyzing the variation in \( Y_{(H)} \) is that the influence of single variable on \( Y_{(H)} \) may be completely different from combined effects of serious of variables on \( Y_{(H)} \). Keeping this in mind, we specify the next equation in which we include \( Y_A \), \( Y_S \) and \( Y_B \) to examine their join influence on \( Y_{(H)} \).

\[
Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_A - b_2 Y_S + b_3 Y_B
\]

\[
Y_{(H)} = 2868.07 - 0.035Y_A + 0.729Y_S + 0.153Y_B
\]

Table: 5.8.

**Regression Analysis Result:**

Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Agricultural occupation, Service occupation and Business occupation as Independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from, Agricultural, Service and Business Occupation of a Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>(-) 0.16</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this equation, we have introduced the three independent variables \( Y_A \), \( Y_S \) and \( Y_B \) jointly to examine their joint impact on \( Y_{(H)} \). Where \( Y_{(H)} \) is the monthly average income and \( Y_A \), \( Y_S \) and \( Y_B \) are income from agricultural, service and business occupations respectively.

The above equation shows satisfactory value of \( R^2 \) and it has been observed that 58 percent of variation of \( Y_{(H)} \) is explained by explanatory variable. However, lower the explanatory power of the coefficient for income from agriculture and income from business do not permit us to accept the model. Though all the explanatory variables have the expected sign and coefficient of income from service \( Y_S \) emerge statistically significant, yet the equation cannot be accepted for our purpose. It is interesting to note that, when \( Y_A \) was used as an individual variable, it was not significant but it maintains a positive sign but when it combine with other independent variables it turn into negative (-) 0.035 indicating that the regression coefficient is not statistically significant. Though multi-co-linearity is not unusual in the case of such socio-economic variables, yet the seriousness of the problem induces us to reject this function. The coefficient of \( Y_B \) do not possess only small value, but it is smaller than while used in individual variable so we reject the equation indicating that income from business has less effect on monthly average income of the Hmar people. The Hmar people are not very much familiar with business, only few of them practices a small business in their local markets.

It is due to their low level of education, they cannot improve their agricultural system and production become relatively insignificant to raise the level of income. The Hmar tribal do not know the new changes and invention in different fields of production. Their methods and implements of cultivations are very primitive. They do not know anything about trade and commerce. Hence the economic status of Hmar tribes is very much backward.

5.3.2. Land Dependency
In our sample study, there are also sample households who depend on land for their income. Mathematically, we may write as \( Y = f(L) \), where, ‘Y’ refers to income and ‘L’ indicates land available to the Hmar sample households.

**Percentage of Private Land Owned**

In our sample, we have found that majority of the sample households do not have private land and only few sample households have private land in their own name. Here, we have tested percentage of household who have private land to the total land available with the sample households to find out whether individual households who have private land have contributed more income than those household who are in community owned land, we have tested partial regression equation as follows:

\[
Y_{(H)} = a + b_1L_P
\]

\[
Y_{(H)} = 3949.42 + 0.580L_P
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of regression coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Private Land</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned by a Hmar sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above result reveals that the equation is not acceptable because the value of \( R^2 \) does not possess the expected sign. However, the coefficient of \( L_P \) and the F-value possesses the expected sign and also statistically significant, but we cannot accept the equation in our case because the \( R^2 \) value and the t value is statistically insignificant. Though the equation has been theoretically satisfactory, yet it is proved to be statistically insignificant. The percentage of land owned cannot be treated as an important determinant of income.
Average Size of Land Owned

The next equation we have tested is:

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1L_O \]
\[ Y_{(H)} = 3723.89 + 0.715L_O \]

Where, ‘\( Y_{(H)} \)’ represents monthly average income of the Hmar people and ‘\( L_O \)’ represents average size of land owned by the sample Hmar household.

Table: 5.10

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Average Size of Land Owned by a Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-value</th>
<th>( t )-value of Parameter</th>
<th>( t )-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average size of Land owned by a Sample Household</td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the equation now reveals that the explanatory power of the variable is 51 percent as reveal by \( R^2 \) and the regression coefficient too has got the necessary sign and is also statistically significant, the function is acceptable on all accounts and therefore, we may conclude that the average size of land owned plays a dominant role in determining the monthly average income of the Hmar people.

It may be mentioned here that the percentage of land owned by the sample household, as reveal by equation cannot be treated as an important determinants of the average monthly income of the Hmar people because the equation is statistically insignificant. But in the case of average size of land owned it is quite significant. If the average sizes of land owned increase the monthly average incomes also increase
or vice versa. So the monthly average income of the Hmar people also depends on the average size of owned. With the increase in the size of land owned by the household there is an increase in more agricultural production and directly increase the income of the household.

**Both Land Variables**

Combining the two independent variables $L_P$ and $L_O$, we have tried to examine whether these two variables taken jointly increase the explanatory power of the independent variables. We therefore test the next equation which is as follows:

$$Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 L_P + b_2 L_O$$

$$Y_{(H)} = 3868.72 - 0.104 L_P + 0.803 L_O$$

Table: 5.11.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Percentage of Private Land Owned and Average Size of Land Owned by the Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Private Land Owned and Average Size of Land Owned by the sample household</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>(-) 0.29 2.26</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above result shows satisfactory value of $R^2$. However, lower the explanatory power of the coefficient for percentage of private land owned do not permit us to accept the equation. Though the explanatory variable has the expected sign and the coefficients of ‘$L_O$’ emerge statistically significant, yet the equation cannot be accepted for our purpose. It is interesting to note that ‘$L_P$’ when used as an individual variable maintains a positive sign and the coefficient is more or less acceptable.
However, when used in combination with average land holdings, the coefficient becomes statistically insignificant. All these lead to reject the equation.

5.3.3. Savings Impacting Income

The relationship between income and savings is one of the key economic indicators. Household income may be saved, used to purchase goods and services, or transferred to other individuals, corporations or the government. Savings are affected by factors such as general economic conditions, age, and individual preferences. However, income is probably the most important determinant of the savings behavior of individuals household. Economic well being of every community depends on income and savings. Higher the level of income and savings better is the economic position of the community. Symbolically, \( \text{Y} = f (\text{S}) \), where, ‘Y’ is an income ‘S’ refers to savings and ‘f’ is the functional relationship between income and savings.

The sample Hmar household earns their income from mainly three occupational practiced namely, agriculture, service and business apart of it saving is made. In this equation we will examine the effect of variation in monthly average saving \( S_{(H)} \) on the variation in monthly average income \( Y_{(H)} \).

Taking all the above factors in to account the next equation we have tried is:

\[
Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 S_{(H)}
\]

\[
Y_{(H)} = 4383.28 + 0.864 S_{(H)}
\]

Here, ‘\( Y_{(H)} \)’ represents monthly average income of the sample households and ‘\( S_{(H)} \)’ refers to monthly average savings of the sample households.

The equation gives a better fit to the sample data so far in terms of the \( R^2 \) value which is more than 74 percent. The coefficient of the independent variable is not only statistically significant and has the expected sign, but it also explains 86 percent of the change of the dependent variable.
Table: 5.12

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Savings of
the Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Savings of the Sample Household</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>44.25</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the F-value for overall significance of the fitted regression has been statistically highly insignificance. The equation therefore cannot be accepted in our case. Stating that, the monthly average savings of the Hmar people plays a very important role in determining the monthly average income. Though our equation reveals that monthly average saving is an important determinant of the average monthly income of the Hmar people because the value of $R^2$ is good but the F-value becomes insignificant it follows our primary data that savings is very low among the Hmar people. Even in some sample villages saving is totally absent. Majority of the Hmar people practiced agriculture and the surplus comes from agriculture is not sufficient to have savings.

After a careful regression exercise of the contribution of monthly average income from agricultural occupation, service occupation and business occupation, we have found that income from service occupation have a good contribution to the monthly average income and the values of all regression equation from service have an expected sign and it is statistically significant. But in the case of income from agricultural occupation, the contribution to the monthly average income is very less and most of the regression values are statistically insignificant. Indicating that, majority of the sample household are engaged in agricultural occupation (as we find in the previous chapter) but the contribution to the monthly average income is very less. The low level of income in agriculture and large participation in agricultural occupation is regarded as one the determinants of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe in the district.
The low level of income in agricultural occupation is also due to the insufficient size of private land owned by an individual household and less percentage of private land owned among the sample Hmar household. Due to insufficient private land for agricultural occupation, large number of household are forced to depend on communal owned land which is provided by the government only for jhum cultivation in the hills. In such type of agricultural practice, production is low and the use of modern technique is totally absent which intern result in low level of income which prove our first hypothesis that the Hmar tribe of south Assam are not familiar with modern technique of production. Due to low level of income in their traditional agricultural practice, many sample household cannot maintain themselves and they are indebted under informal source of borrowings (which we have also highlighted in the last chapter) as we mentioned in our second hypothesis.

In business occupation, the Hmar people are engaged in hawkers-cum-retailers-cum-cloth sellers. The number of household engaged in such occupation is very less and the contribution of monthly average income is very insignificant. The results of all regression values also prove that the contribution of business occupation to the monthly average income is statistically unacceptable. The insignificant values of regression result of business occupation indicates that there are no Hmar sample household who owned a big business they are engaged in a very small type of business nearby the local markets which prove half of our hypothesis which state that the Hmar tribe are characterized by lack of entrepreneurial ability.

5.4. Savings Regression Model

In this section, we have again three sub-sections namely, occupation dependency, land dependency and savings dependency. In our sample survey, we find that the Hmar households are engaged in agricultural occupation, service and business occupation. Some of the Hmar households have monthly savings from the income earned form these three occupations. But majority of the sample households have no savings. It is mainly agricultural Hmar households who have a very less savings. In order to identify which of the occupation have higher savings to the monthly average
savings we run the regression equation and this helps in estimating determinants of economic backwardness. In this section, we assumed that $S = f(O)$, where, ‘$S$’ indicate savings, ‘$O$’ refers to the income earned from the type of occupation and ‘$f$’ is the functional relationship between savings and income from occupations. Savings is a dependent variable and it is affected by the increase or decrease in income from a specific occupation.

5.4.1. Occupation and Savings Relations

Agricultural Occupation

We have tested monthly average savings $S_{(H)}$ and income from agriculture $Y_A$ through regression equation as follows:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_A$$

$$S_{(H)} = 703.04 - 0.295 Y_A$$

Table: 5.13

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Agricultural occupation as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of regression coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Agricultural Occupation of Hmar household</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>(-) 1.19</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated result reveal that the explanatory power of the variable goes down as $R^2$ is now only 0.087. The coefficient of the independent variable not only possess a low value but also negative sign and statistically insignificant. The t-value is also negative and hence the function is unacceptable in all the cases indicating that monthly average income from agriculture plays an insignificant role in determining monthly average saving. As we have mentioned.
Service Occupation

In order to understand the contribution of income from service to the monthly average saving of the Hmar sample household of south Assam, we used the regression equation by taking the monthly average saving $S_{(H)}$ as dependent variable and monthly average income earned from service $Y_S$ as independent variable. The next equation we have tested is:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_S$$

$$S_{(H)} = (-) 18.33 + 0.583Y_S$$

Table: 5.14

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Service occupation as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Service Occupation of a Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>(-) 0.11</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated result reveals that the explanatory power of the variable is not high enough to accept the equation as indicated by $R^2$. In the equation we find that the coefficient of $Y_S$ possess the expected value but the sign of constant itself is negative and the t-value of the coefficient is again negative and insignificant. The overall significant of the estimated regression as explain by F-value is also highly insignificant, so we cannot accept the equation in our case indicating that the contribution of monthly average income from service to the monthly average savings is not enough to accept the equation. Indicating that, even some of the service job holders do not have any savings.
Business Occupation

Here we have tested once again the relationship between the monthly average savings $S_{(H)}$ and the monthly average income from business $Y_B$ using regression equation as follows:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1 Y_B$$

$$S_{(H)} = 404.70 - 0.078Y_B$$

Table: 5.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Business Occupation of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>(-) 0.30</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above results reveal that the coefficient of the equation has not only possess a negative sign but also statistically insignificant. Moreover, the overall fit of the equation as revealed by $R^2$ is also very much unsatisfactory. Again, we cannot accept the equation because all the values are statistically insignificant.

All Occupations Together

To identify a superior equation, we have tried multiple regression equation and thereby we include three explanatory variables in the equation to examine whether the pattern of monthly average saving improves any further. The rationale for inclusion of these factors for analyzing the variation of $S_{(H)}$ is that the influence of single variable on $S_{(H)}$ may be different from effects of series of variables on $S_{(H)}$. Keeping in mind, we specify the next multiple regression equation in which we
include $Y_A$, $Y_S$ and $Y_B$ to examine their joint influence on $S_{(H)}$. The equation is as follows:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1Y_A + b_2Y_S + b_3Y_B$$

$$S_{(H)} = 332.47 - 0.330Y_A + 0.600Y_S + 0.003Y_B$$

The result of the above equation reveals that the value of $R^2$ is now improves further to 0.44 and it is the highest value comparison to the above three partial equation and the coefficient of $Y_S$ not possess the expected value but also statistically significant, yet the equation cannot be accepted because the value of $R^2$ is still not high enough to accept the equation.

Table: 5.16.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Monthly Average Income from Agricultural, Service and Business occupation as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Income from Agriculture, Service and Business Occupation of a Sample Household</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.17 (-)</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coefficient of $Y_A$ is higher than that in partial regression but still insignificant and has a negative sign and the coefficient of $Y_B$ further declined and it does not only possess a small value but also statistically insignificant, so we cannot accept the equation on this ground. Indicating that, services have contributed a good part of Hmar saving but the other two occupations namely, agriculture and business has insignificant contribution to the monthly average saving of the Hmar sample households in south Assam. In short, we may say that the overall savings of the Hmar sample household from three occupations are very low and statistically unacceptable.
5.4.2. Role of Land in Savings

In this section, once again we have analyzed the relationship between savings and land holdings of the Hmar sample households. The saving and land function is: \( S = f(L) \), where, ‘S’ is savings and ‘L’ refers to land owned and ‘f’ is the functional relationship of savings and land owned.

**Percentage of Private Land Owned (L_P)**

We have tried the next partial regression equation by taking ‘L_P’ as independent variable as follows:

\[
S_{(H)} = a + b_1L_P
\]

\[
S_{(H)} = (-) 5.42 + 0.586L_P
\]

Table: 5.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of regression coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Private Land Owned by a Sample Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>(-) 0.03</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above result shows that the regression coefficient of the percentage of private land owned by a sample household has a positive effect on monthly average saving of the Hmar people. But the equation cannot be accepted in our case because the overall fit of the equation as indicated by the value of R² is unsatisfactory. It reveals that though expected theoretical relationship between \( L_P \) and \( S_{(H)} \) has been established but the equation cannot be accepted on statistical grounds. The statistical
Insignificance of the equation means that $L_P$ has less effect in bringing about variation in monthly average saving of the Hmar people.

### Average Size of Land Owned ($L_O$)

\[
S(H) = a + b_1 L_O \\
S(H) = 59.03 + 0.560 L_O
\]

The above equation shows the relationship between the average size of land owned and monthly average saving. We find that the coefficient of $L_O$ possesses the expected sign, but the overall fit of the equation as explained by $R^2$ do not come out statistically significant.

**Table: 5.18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of regression coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Size of Land Owned by the Sample Household</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In that case we cannot accept the equation indicating that the average size of land owned by a Hmar sample household is not sufficient enough to rise the monthly average saving. Since the size of the land owned by the Hmar household is small, production is also less which results in small savings.
Both Land Variables

Combining the two independent variables of $L_P$ and $L_O$ we tried to examine whether these two variables taken jointly increase the explanatory power of the independent variables. We therefore test the next equation, which is as follows:

$$ S(H) = a + b_1 L_P + b_2 L_O $$
$$ S(H) = (-) 8.14 + 0.396 L_P + 0.223 L_O $$

In this equation, we have jointly introduced the independent variables of $L_P$ and $L_O$ in view of the acceptability of the individual functions. The estimated result reveals that, the explanatory power of the variable indicated by $R^2$ has now improved to some extent comparison to the previous two partial equations, but statistically still it is insignificant.

Table: 5.19.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Percentage of Private Land Owned and Average Size of Land Owned by a sample households as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Private Land Owned and Average Size of Land Owned by a Hmar sample household</td>
<td>0.357</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>(-) 8.14</td>
<td>0.39 0.22</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coefficients of both the independent variables have not only declined in combination effect but also statistically insignificant. Though the t-values are high enough to accept the equation, but due to the insignificant value of $R^2$ and the coefficient of both the independent variables we cannot accept the equation in our case. Indicating that, the percentage of land owned by individual household and the average size of land owned by the Hmar household is not enough to raise income so as to make savings.
5.4.3. Savings from Divergent Occupations

In this section, we will also examine the individual contribution of monthly average saving from agriculture, service and business to the monthly average saving of the Hmar people through partial regression analysis. Symbolically, \( S = f (O) \), where ‘S’ refers to monthly average savings and ‘O’ indicate monthly average savings from divergent occupations.

**Agriculture Savings \( (S_A) \)**

By taking monthly average saving from agriculture ‘\( S_A \)’ as independent variable and monthly average saving ‘\( S_{(H)} \)’ as dependent variable the next equation is as follows:

\[
S_{(H)} = a + b_1 S_A
\]

\[
S_{(H)} = 269.29 + 0.459 S_A
\]

Table: 5.20.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Savings from Agricultural Occupation of the Sample Households as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Savings from Agricultural Occupation of a Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.211</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above results reveal that the equation is not acceptable since the value of \( R^2 \) is extremely low. However, the coefficient possesses the expected sign. But the coefficient is not come out statistically significant. The equation therefore cannot be accepted in our case. It therefore, implies that monthly average saving from
agriculture has no effect in bringing about a variation in monthly average saving of the Hmar people in the district. It supports our primary data that, saving from agriculture is totally absent in seven villages and the remaining sample villages who have saving from agriculture occupation, the amount of savings are also very insignificant due to low level of income.

Service Savings ($S$)

The equation we specify is as follows:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1S$$

$$S_{(H)} = 109.06 + 0.620S$$

The equation do not give a better fit to the sample data in terms of $R^2$ value which is less than 4 percent and the F- statistics for overall significance of the fitted regression has found to be statistically insignificant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Savings from Service Occupation of a Hmar household</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coefficient of the independent variable is statistically significant and has the expected sign. It also explains 62 percent of the change of the dependent variable. The equation therefore seems to be unsatisfactory due to low level of $R^2$ and F- value and hence we cannot accept in our case. Indicating that, monthly averages saving
from service do not have much contribution to the monthly average saving of the Hmar people.

**Business Savings ($S_B$)**

The equation is presented below:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1S_B$$

$$S_{(H)} = 386.39 - 0.034S_B$$

Even in this equation, we find that the value of $R^2$ is very much unsatisfactory, it is almost zero. The coefficient of monthly average saving from business is not only insignificant, but also a negative sign. So, none of the value become statistically significant, the equation therefore cannot be accepted in our case indicating that, $S_B$ is playing a very insignificant role in bringing about variation in $S_{(H)}$ of the Hmar people.

**Table: 5.22.**

**Regression Analysis Result:**

**Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Savings from Business Occupation of the Sample Households as independent variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Savings from Business Occupation of a Hmar household</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>(-) 0.13</td>
<td>0.896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above three partial regression equation, we find that only saving from service have come out statistically significant.

**All Three Savings Together**

The multiple regression equation formulated, therefore is:

$$S_{(H)} = a + b_1S_A + b_2S_S + b_3S_B$$

$$S_{(H)} = 3.042 + 0.372S_A + 0.605S_S + 0.094S_B$$
The above result shows quite satisfactory value of $R^2$. However, lower the explanatory power of the coefficient for monthly average saving from agriculture ($S_A$) and monthly average saving from business ($S_B$) do not permit us to accept the equation. Though all the explanatory variables have the expected sign and the coefficient of monthly average saving from service ($S_S$) emerge statistically significant, yet the equation cannot be accepted for our purpose. It is interesting to note that, both the coefficient of $S_A$ and $S_B$ improved in combine with other variables but still it is insignificant, we cannot accept the equation. In this context we may observe that saving from service has played an important role in the monthly average savings of the Hmar people.

Table: 5.23.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Savings from Agricultural, Service and Business Occupation of the Sample Hmar Households as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F- Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Savings from Agricultural, Service and Business Occupation of a Hmar household</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.92 3.01 0.46</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, our savings model established the relationship between monthly average saving and monthly average savings from different occupation. From the savings regression models, we found that none of the savings equation come out statistically significant which indicates that savings from all occupational groups have a very insignificant contribution to the monthly average savings of the Hmar household. Though savings are important indicators for economic development, the savings of the sample Hmar household are very less and they remain in a backward economy. Their backwardness lies mainly due to low level of occupational practice.
Remarks

An attempt have been made to find out the main determinants of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe of south Assam with the help of primary data collected from only 250 sample Hmar households from the cross section of Cachar district. We have advanced with 19 regression equations related to primary data of income, savings and land holdings of Hmar sample households.

Most of our regression equations come out with statistically insignificant except equations on income from service occupation, which indicate that overcrowding in agriculture with low level of surplus over production is one of the main reasons of their backwardness. Moreover, the percentage of private owned land by individual households is less and the sizes of owned private land are also very highly responsible for economic backwardness.
Chapter – 6

Backwardness: An Exploration of Non-Economic Factors and Constraints
In this chapter, our purpose is to verify the non-economic forces having impact on economic dimensions of life of households and determining backwardness of the Hmar tribe. Five non-economic variables like civil amenity, health, mortality, family size and literacy are brought under analysis. These variables may also be treated as clubbed with economic ones; however, we have separated these in our work. An assessment of the impact of these factors on continuation of the backwardness is made. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section gives descriptions about civil amenities available to Hmar villages under consideration, health status of households and mortality of individuals. Second section deals with regression analysis of non-economic factors of family, literacy and health. The third section summarizes the constraints and problems of Hmar in the way of growth. A conclusion is tagged at the last.

6.1. Noneconomic Dimension:
Civil Amenity, Health and Mortality

Social and economic infrastructures are quite significant in determining the level and rate of growth of a society. In the country, there has been a political slogan to highlight the significance of this aspect of social life of individuals and families, and the slogan has been: paani, bizli and sarak (water, electricity and road). Without these basic amenities, only distress, dislocation and disappointment follow.

So late as till the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, most of the sample villages of the Hmar tribe in south Assam do not have proper roads and communications, no power connection and majority of the households lives in hut which is made of only wooden and bamboos. There is general scarcity of civil amenities. Except in Hmarkhawlien villages and Silchar town, there are no health centers in the Hmar dominated areas. Due to absence of health centre, the amount of expenditure on maintaining health is high which is nearly equal to their income. Many sample households do not have enough money for medication which is responsible for high infant mortality and mortality among the Hmar.
Our regressions results on expenditure on health also clearly show that huge expenditure on health have a negative impact on both monthly average income and savings of the Hmar sample households. Due to poor health of the sample households, most of their income is spend for medication and make savings difficult for which many households remain economically backward.

In the next section, we also discuss about family particulars. The numbers of family members in the sample households are also large in comparison to their income. It is due to large family size, family consumption is high and they cannot save a part of their small income.

In our sample, there are also some household who have large earning members in the family. But simply large numbers of earning members does not help the sample Hmar household in improving their income in which many of them have very low earnings which is also supported by our regressions result.

Civil Amenity

When we talk of development, we cannot deny civil amenities, health and mortality rate. The increase or decrease in the economy is very much link with amenity, health and mortality rate of the society. So, civil amenities like pure drinking water, electricity, latrine, bathroom etc. are the basic necessities of life. Bad amenities have evil effects on health, such as sickness and disease, absenteeism and labor turnover.

Keeping in mind in our sample study, we have collected information on civil amenities available to the Hmar household and also amount of expenditure incurred for maintaining health status so as to understand the impact of health on their economy. We have also collected information about infant mortality and dead recorded of the Hmar sample household during the last five years to highlight effect of mortality on their economy.
Table: 6.1

Civil Amenities Available to the Hmar Sample Household:
2007-08, (Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Type of Amenity available</th>
<th>Total Number of Household having Amenities</th>
<th>Percentage to the total Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Well water</td>
<td>139.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Stream Water</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Supply water</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>177.0</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Latrine</td>
<td>210.0</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Separate kitchen</td>
<td>148.0</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Combine kitchen</td>
<td>102.0</td>
<td>40.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

In the sample Hmar villages of Cachar district of south Assam, there are three main sources of water namely, well, stream water and Public Health Engineering (PHE) supply water. Out of 250 sample size, about 139 households (55.6 percent) are depending on well water, 57 households (22.8 percent) on stream water and only 54 households (21.6 percent) depend on supply water. Out of 17 sample villages, electric current, which is very essential for economic development was totally absent in 7 villages. About 73 households have no electric connection and a total of only 177 households (70.8 percent) have electric connection in their houses. Though bathroom is important for daily use, but the Hmar sample households of rural areas cannot manage bathroom due to lack of water supply connection in their house. In Cachar district of south Assam a total of only sample 50 households (20 percent) have bathroom facilities and those households have water connection in their own house. Besides these, above 210 households (84 percent) have latrine and at least 40 households are without latrine. About 148 households have separate kitchen and the remaining 102 households have no separate kitchen.

Among the civil amenities available to population, housing conditions overall is the most important. We have already discussed of it in chapter four. Even after fifty years of development planning, above 46 percent of households are still living in the traditional type of house known as huts made of bamboo, wood and straw only. During the time of field work, those households were asked about their housing
conditions and most of the respondents living in huts replied that, they are not satisfied with their conditions. Due to lack of gainful employment and low level of income of the household, they are unable to manage cement house and compelled to live in huts without bathroom and even without latrines.

Housing is one of the basic necessities of human being. It is an abode where basic human integrations take place and future citizens of a country are molded. Bad housing conditions have evil effects such as sickness and diseases, absenteeism and labor turnover. Better housing condition is necessary not only for raising the level of living, but also to increase the productivity of household members. Housing, therefore, includes all civil amenities such as water, electricity, latrine, bathroom etc. Accordingly, we have also collected information about civil amenities such as water source, kitchen, latrine and bathroom so as to highlight their economic positions through civil amenities.

Health

Health is an important function not only for medical care, but also for the overall integrated development of society-cultural, economic, education, social and political. When we talk of Hmar economy, we cannot ignore health because earnings, production, distribution of the sample Hmar depends on their health condition. So, good health is necessary to have better economic positions. To accelerate the socio-economic development in the districts as a whole, the government has set up numbers of hospitals, primary health centre, sub-centre and distributing free medicine for the rural poor. In Cachar district there are 22 Primary Health Centre, 9 Dispensaries and 5109 Sub-Centers up to 2004 (Statistical Hand Book Assam, 2005 p-174). Besides these, there are also one medical college, one civil hospital and one cancer hospital in the district.

Information regarding health conditions, their monthly expenditure for medicine and treatment, infant mortality, dead recorded during the last five years in the household, common diseases in the villages etc. are collected so as to highlight their economic backwardness in terms of health. In most of the Hmar sample villages, free medicine
like polio, vitamin tablets and some malaria medicine are distributed by the local nurse (ANM) to the villagers once in a month or once in two months. Polio is more or less successful in the Hmar sample villages and child health is more or less improved at present. But malaria is still one of the common diseases in every Hmar sample villages. Many of the Hmar sample households do not have proper mosquito net and proper cloth for sleeping. As a result, many of them have malaria case. Because of ill health, many of them get disturbed in their daily work which directly hampers their economy.

Our primary data on annual expenditure on health of the Hmar sample households shows that though the sample households have a very insignificant annual income, their expenditure on health is very high which is also regarded as one of their economic backwardness. In many cases of the Hmar sample households, a huge expenditure on health is responsible for high indebtedness. It is found that, out of 250 sample Hmar households, about 23 (9.2 percent) households have below rupees 5000.00 expenditure on maintaining health.

Table: 6.2
Annual Expenditure on Health of the Hmar Sample Household: 2007-08
(Cachar, Assam)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Average Annual Expenditure on Health (in rupees)</th>
<th>Number of Household</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rupees 5,000.00 (below)</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rupees 5,001.00 to 15,000.00</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rupees 15,001.00 to 25,000.00</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rupees 25,001.00 to 35,000.00</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rupees 35,001.00 to 45,000.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rupees 45,001.00 to 55,000.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Rupees 55,001.00 to 65,000.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Rupees 65,001.00 (above)</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>All Households</td>
<td>250.00</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected form Field Survey

We have also found that 69 (27.6 percent) households have at least rupees 5,001.00 to 15,000.00 expenditure on health and another 71 (28.4 percent) households have rupees 15,001.00 to 25,000.00 annual expenditure for maintaining health. It is also
It is a surprise to mention that at least 26 (10.4 percent) Hmar sample households have rupees 25,001.00 to 35,000.00 annual expenditure on health and about 20 (8.0 percent) have also annual expenditure of rupees 35,001.00 to 45,000.00 for maintain their health. In our sample study, we have also found that about 12 (4.8 percent) have annual expenditure of rupees 45,001.00 to 55,000.00 for maintain health and at least 13 (5.2 percent) Hmar sample households have rupees 55,001.00 to 65,000.00 annual expenditure for health.

There are also 16 (6.4 percent) households who have annual expenditure more than rupees 65,001.00 for maintaining health. It is to be noted that, most of the sample villages are situated in the interior remote area in which numbers of persons are infected by malaria due to mosquito bite. There are also some other disease which we find in Hmar sample villages but malaria is common to all. Due to ill health numbers of persons cannot work regularly which affect their economy.

**Mortality**

Malaria is still a common deadly disease among the Hmar sample household and number of children died before attaining one year. It is found that out of 250 Hmar sample household, 19 babies died before reaching one year and the most common deadly disease for baby is malaria. In our sample, about 7 babies (36.85 percent) babies are died due to malaria and about 6 babies (31.58 percent) died just after delivery. There are also 3 babies (15.78 percent) who died due to malaria plus jaundice and 10.52 percents (2 babies) died from only jaundice. The remaining only 5.27 percents (1 baby) was dead due to typhoid.

Our sample data shows that the infant mortality among the Hmar tribe is high in case of malaria disease and it was followed by dead after delivery. Our primary data suggest that Malaria case is very high in the sample Hmar villages. The reason being that, most of the Hmars sample villages are residing in an interior remote area and in most of the cases they cannot maintain sufficient cloth and mosquito net due to economic backwardness.
Table: 6.3.

Infant Mortality of Hmar Sample Household during the Last Five Years:
2001-06, Cachar, Assam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Total Number of Persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>36.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Death just after delivery</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>31.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Malaria combine with Jaundice</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jaundice</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Typhoid</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>05.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All Cases</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

In our study, we have also a primary data of dead recorded of the sample household for the last five years with which we examine the impact of health on the Hmar economy. The Hmar sample households do not maintain a written record on dead. The data may have some limitations due to recollecting from their memory.

As per information from the respondents, about 86 persons died from 250 sample households. Out of 86 persons dead recorded during the last five years, malaria has occupied the highest dead case and about 24 persons (27.90 percents) died due to sufferings from malaria and 23 persons (26.75 percents) died due to cancer. It is also found that about 10 persons (11.63 percents) died due to old age and all of them were more than 80 years of age.

We have again 8 persons (9.30 percents) died due to sufferings from tuberculosis generally known as T.B. and about 6 persons (6.98 percents) died due to malaria plus jaundice and typhoid respectively. In the Hmar sample villages in Cachar district, high fever is also common and at least 4 persons (4.66 percents) are died due to high fever as and only 2 persons (2.32 percents) death of undiagnosed disease. It is also surprising that 1 person each (1.16 percent) died due to heart attack, pneumonia and suicide respectively.
Figure: 6.1

Infant Mortality of Hmar Sample Household for Last Five Years (Cachar, Assam):
2001-06

So, the above data follows that in Hmar sample villages, malaria still becomes the
most popular deadly disease for both infant mortality and above one year. Due to
poor economics, many of the households cannot purchase mosquito net and added to
this, the common practice of shifting cultivation in the jungles where they cannot
protect themselves from mosquito is responsible for high malaria case in the Hmar
villages. In order to protect themselves from mosquito, some of the sample Hmar
practice smoking of cigarette, which badly affect their health and at least 26.75
percent died due to cancer.

Source: Adapted from Table: 6.3
Table: 6.4.

Dead Recorded of the Hmar Sample Household for the Last Five Years: 2001-06 (Cachar, Assam).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Percentage of Dead Recorded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>27.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>26.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Malaria + Jaundice</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Typhoid</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>High Fever</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Not detected (unknown)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Heart Attack</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pneumonia</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>All Type</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data collected from Field Survey

Malaria is still become the deadly disease for which majority of dead case belongs. Though, government of Assam has set up number of health centre to protect rural health. But our data suggest that, it has not been still improved the health of sample Hmar villages. On the basis of the above findings, we may by say that, primary health which requires at least health education, proper nutrition, adequate and safe drinking water, proper sanitation, maternal and children health care, family planning, immunization programme, prevention and control of endemic disease etc. are not enough in the Hmar dominated area.

Health status of the people which determines the average expectation of life, number of person in the productive age bracket production, productivity, earning capacity, employment and finally welfare is still insufficient among the sample Hmar villages. The poor health conditions among the sample Hmar households have direct negative impact on economic variables like income, savings. Because of poor health, their expenditure for medication is high, consequently they cannot save.
In the next section, we deal with family particulars, literacy and health again on the basis of regression analysis. The descriptive particular of the family and household has already been discussed in section 4.1 of chapter 4 and about literacy in section 4.6 of chapter 4. In the next section, we confine only with regression coefficients and their statistical significance on these three variables.

Figure-6.2

Causes of Dead Recorded of Sample Hmar: 2001-06 (Cachar, Assam)

Source: Adapted from Table-6.4.

6.2. Regression Models: Family, Literacy and Health

On the basis of the primary data we have prepared a regression equation to identify whether the monthly average income have been affected by a household size, literacy level and number of earning members in the household. Normally, we have expected that a big or small household size will increase or decrease the expenditure
of the household and thereby affect the monthly income. In a common since, we have also expected that if the level of literacy is high, people will receive handsome amount by participating in a gainful occupation. In the same way, if the number of earning members is more we hope that income of the household will increase and consequently the economic position will be better. In order to prove the above observation we have tested by making monthly average income of the sample Hmar household as dependent variable and size of household, level of literacy and number earners in the household as dependent variable. $F_S$, $E_M$, $E_H$ and $L_{IT}$ are the four independent variables and $Y_{(H)}$ and $S_{(H)}$ are the two dependent variables. Other notations are:

- $S_{(H)}$ refers to the monthly average savings of the sample hmar household (in rupees);
- $Y_{(H)}$ refers to the monthly average income of the sample hmar household (It is a dependent variable) (in rupees);
- $F_S$ refers to the average family size of the hmar sample household (in numbers);
- $E_M$ refers to the average number of earning members in the hmar sample household (in numbers);
- $L_{IT}$ refers to the level of literacy of the hmar sample household (in percentage);
- and,
- $E_H$ refers to the average monthly expenditure on health (in rupees)

We examine the relationship between monthly average income and the family size $(F_S)$ by using the partial regression equations to show how much the family size has influence the monthly average income. There are also multiples regression equations used in this section. All equations are linear and method used in ordinary least-square (OLS) of regression exercise.

**Family Particulars**

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 F_S \]
\[ Y_{(H)} = 4009 + 0.130 F_S \]
where $Y_{(H)}$ refers to monthly average income of the Hmar sample household in Cachar district of south Assam during 2007-08 and $F_S$ indicates average family size of Hmar sample household.

Table: 6.5.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Average Family Size of Hmar Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average family size of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result reveals that the model is not acceptable both on theoretical and statistical ground since $R^2$ is extremely low. The coefficient of $F_S$ is not only small but also statistically insignificant. The t-value and the F-value are also statistically insignificant, so we cannot accept the model in our case and it indicates that family size cannot be an important factor to determine the average monthly income of the Hmar people.

This follows our primary data that most of the Hmar have big family size with very low income which is very much against their economy. It does not meant that the all the bigger family size have more income, it only increase the dependency ratio. The next model we specify is

$$Y_{(H)} = a + b_1E_M$$

$$Y_{(H)} = 8284 - 0.91E_M$$

where, $Y_{(H)}$ refers to monthly average income of the Hmar sample household in Cachar district of south Assam during 2007-08 and $E_M$ indicates average number of earning members of the Hmar sample household.
Table 6.6.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Average Number of Earning Members of Hmar Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Earning Members of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>(-) 0.35</td>
<td>0.620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testing the model with the help of primary data reveals that there exist a negative relationship between the monthly average income and the number of earnings members in the Hmar household. The regression coefficients of numbers of earning members have a negative effect on the monthly average income of the Hmar household and it is not statistically significant. The overall fit of the model as indicated by the value of $R^2$ is also unsatisfactory indicating that the number of earning members in the Hmars household is not high enough to raise their monthly average income. So, the number of earning members in the Hmar household is not sufficient to raise the monthly average income of the sample household. In some sample Hmar household, number of earning member is more but they are employing in very low incomes which have less affect on monthly average income.

The multiple regression equation we specify is:

$$Y_{(H)} = a + b_1 E_M + b_2 F_S$$

$$Y_{(H)} = 3792 - 0.265 E_M + 0.290 F_S$$

Examining jointly the effect of the variables, in the equation, we find that $R^2$ has improved somehow comparison to partial regression model and the coefficient of $E_M$ and $F_S$ also improved to some extent and also the F-value as indicated by the above equation, but they are all statistically insignificant because they do not possess the necessary signs as well and hence the equation cannot be accepted in our case.
Table: 6.7.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Average Number of Earning Members and Average Family Size of Hmar Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Earning Members and average Size of Family Members of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>(−) 0.817</td>
<td>0.893 0.641</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above model, we find that the coefficient of $F_S$ has maintained a positive value because majority of the Hmar people has large family members which support our primary data. Theoretically we may expect that, large family members will have more income than the small family members. But in the case of the Hmar people it is not so and the coefficient of $E_M$ do not only possess the require value but also a negative sign, indicating that the numbers of earning members is insignificant to rise the monthly average income. In other words we may say that the Hmar people have large family members but the numbers of earning members is very less. As a result, large numbers of family members are depending on small earning members.

Monthly Average Savings and Family size, Number of Earners

We tried the multiple regressions by taking family size and earning members as independent variables.

\[
S_{(H)} = a + b_1F_S + b_2E_M
\]

\[
S_{(H)} = 494.30 + 0.022F_S - 0.111E_M
\]
Where \( S_{(H)} \) is the monthly average savings of the Hmar sample household, \( F_S \) is the average family size and \( E_M \) is the average number earning members of the household.

The result of the equation indicate that the equation is unacceptable both on theoretical as well as statistical grounds. The value of \( R^2 \) also indicates the extremely poor fit of the equation. Though the regression coefficient of \( F_S \) has maintained a positive sign but emerges statistically insignificant and the coefficient of \( E_M \) not only low but also a negative sign, so we cannot accept the equation in our case. Indicating that, the average family size and the average numbers of earning members are not an important factor for determining the monthly average saving of the Hmar people.

Table: 6.8.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Savings as dependent variable and Average Family Size and Average Number of Earning Members of Hmar Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Family Size and Average Number of Earning Members of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.07 (-) 0.33</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literacy

The next model we specify is as follows:

\[
Y_{(H)} = a + b_1L_{IT} \\
Y_{(H)} = 3783 + 0.831L_{IT}
\]

Where, \( Y_{(H)} \) represents literacy rate of the Hmar people and \( L_{IT} \) refers to level of literacy of the Hmar sample household.
Testing the model with the help of primary data reveals that there exist a positive relationship between Monthly average income and literacy rate of the Hmar people. Higher the literacy rate, higher is also the rate of participation in gainful employment and increase the monthly average income. It means that education or training of the sample household raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers’ future income by increasing their lifetime earnings.

Table: 6.9.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Percentage of Literacy Rate of Hmar Sample Household as independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Sample Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>33.59</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above model is acceptable both on theoretical and statistical grounds. The coefficient of determination between monthly average income and literacy rate is 69 percent as revealed by R². The regression coefficient is also statistically significant and has a required sign. In other words, higher the literacy rate higher is the monthly average income. The value of R² is not only high, it is the highest value among the different equation used and the F-value also indicate a positive sign. So, literacy is the main factors governing the monthly average income of the Hmar people.

The statistical validity of the model prompts us that the growth of literacy has a strong influence in determining the level of monthly average income of the Hmar people. It is due to the low level of literacy, more people cannot engage in service and thereby participating in the traditional practice of agriculture. It is just emerged that literacy can be an important factor for large participation of the Hmar people in service job.
Agricultural Occupation and Literacy

The equation we have tested is

\[ Y_A = a + b_1L_{IT} \]
\[ Y_A = 4727 - 0.285L_{IT} \]

Where, \( Y_A \) is the monthly average income from agriculture and \( L_{IT} \) refers to literacy rate of the Hmar sample household.

Table: 6.10.

Regression Analysis Result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Sample Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>(-) 1.15</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the above equation reveal that the equation is not acceptable on statistical grounds. \( R^2 \) is almost zero indicating absolutely no relationship between \( Y_A \) and \( L_{IT} \). The coefficient of \( L_{IT} \) have not only possess a small value but also a negative sign which is statistically insignificant. It supports our primary data that the Hmar people who practiced agriculture are mainly illiterate or less educated people.

Service Occupation and Literacy

In our sample data, we find that some Hmar household have service job both in private and government for their livelihood. To find out the relationship between monthly average income from service occupation and literacy rate we tried the next
partial regression model by taking literacy rate as independent variable and monthly average income from service as dependent variable:

\[ Y_S = a + b_1 L_{IT} \]
\[ Y_S = 6008.58 + 0.525 L_{IT} \]

Here, \( Y_S \) refers to monthly average income from service and \( L_{IT} \) indicate literacy rate of the Hmar sample household.

Table: 6.11.

Regression Analysis Result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Sample Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above result shows quite satisfactory value of the explanatory variable. Though, the value of \( R^2 \) does not possess the expected sign, but the coefficient of the explanatory variable and the value of F-statistics have not only possessed the expected sign but also emerge statistically significant, so we accept the model for our purpose. Indicating that monthly average income from service of the Hmar people is mainly depending on literacy rate. Higher the literacy rate higher is the income from service and vice-versa.

**Service Occupation and Literacy**

Here, once again we have tried the next partial regression model by taking literacy rate as independent variable and monthly average income from business as dependent variable as follows:
\[ Y_B = a + b_1L_{IT} \]
\[ 2654 + 0.075L_{IT} \]

Where \( Y_B \) is the monthly average income from business and \( L_{IT} \) refers to the literacy rate of the Hmar sample household.

Table: 6.12.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income from Business Occupation as dependent variable and Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Hmar Sample Household as Independent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Sample Hmar Household</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above equation, we find that the value of \( R^2 \) is very low even lower than the previous equation. So we cannot accept the equation for our purpose indicating that literacy rate and income from business has no relationship. The coefficient of \( L_{IT} \) not only possesses a small value but also statistically insignificant. The statistical insignificant support our primary data that business is practiced by the Hmar people due to lack of employment opportunities in the district. They practiced a small business in the local area and most of them are less educated persons.

From the above three partial equation, literacy has direct relationship with the monthly average income from service occupation and the rest two occupation has less or no relationship with the literacy rate.

**Monthly Average Saving and Literacy**

In a total of 250 Hmar sample household in Cachar district of south Assam, we find that there are few service holders who have monthly savings but the rest two
occupations have no proper savings. We have therefore tried the next model incorporating the literacy rate as independent variable monthly average savings of Hmar sample households as dependent variable:

\[
S_{(H)} = a + b_1L_{IT}
\]

\[
S_{(H)} = (-60.384 + 0.912L_{IT})
\]

Here, \( S_{(H)} \) is the monthly average savings of the Hmar sample household and \( L_{IT} \) refers to literacy rate.

Table: 6.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Literacy Rate of a Sample Household</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>74.45</td>
<td>(-) 0.90</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testing the equation with the help of primary data reveals that there exist a positive relationship between literacy rate and monthly average savings of the Hmar sample household. The equation gives a better fit to the sample data in terms of \( R^2 \) value which is more than 83 percent and the F- value for overall significance of the fitted regression has been found to be statistically highly significant. The coefficient of the independent variable is not only statistically significant and has the expected sign, it explains more than 91% of the change of the dependent variable. The equation therefore seems to be satisfactory on all accounts and hence can be accepted in our case. So, literacy rate is an important factor for increasing the monthly average saving of the Hmar people. On the other hand we may say that more and more literacy rate more and more saving and vice versa.
Monthly Average Income and Monthly Average Expenditure on Health

We have use regression equation by taking monthly average income of the sample households as dependent variable and average monthly expenditure on health as independent variable to identify the impact of poor health on monthly income.

\[ Y_{(H)} = a + b_1E_{H} \]
\[ Y_{(H)} = 9707.60 - 0.137E_{H} \]

Here, \( Y_{(H)} \) refers to monthly average income of the Hmar sample household in Cachar district of south Assam during 2007-08 and \( E_{H} \) indicates monthly average expenditure on health of the Hmar sample households.

Table: 6.14.

Regression Analysis Result:
Monthly Average Income as dependent variable and Monthly Average Expenditure on Health as Independent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Expenditure on Health of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>(-) 0.53</td>
<td>0.600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the equation shows that estimated F-value is not high enough to accept the equation for our purpose but also none of the other regression results come out statistically significant. The \( R^2 \) value posses not only low but the coefficient of \( E_{H} \) has also a negative sign. So, we cannot accept the equation indicating that monthly average expenditure on health of the Hmar sample households has badly affected their monthly average income. Nearly half of their income is spend on purchasing medicine and consulting doctors. In the next equation, we have also tried monthly average savings and monthly average expenditure on health.
Monthly Average Savings and Monthly Average Expenditure on Health

On the basis of the primary data we have collected, we have also prepared a regression equation by taking monthly average savings as dependent variable and monthly average expenditure on health as independent variable so as to determine the impact of expenditure on health to the monthly average savings of the Hmar sample households. The equation we specify is-

\[ S_{(H)} = a + b_1E_H \]

\[ S_{(H)} = 437.473 - 0.081E_H \]

Here, \( S_{(H)} \) refers to monthly average savings of the Hmar sample household in Cachar district of south Assam during 2007-08 and \( E_H \) indicates monthly average expenditure on health of the Hmar sample households.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor/ Explanatory Variable</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>Estimated F-Value</th>
<th>t-value of Parameter</th>
<th>t-value of Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Average Expenditure on Health of a Hmar Sample Household</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>(-) 0.31</td>
<td>0.757</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our regression result shows that there is a negative relationship between monthly average savings of the sample households \( S_{(H)} \) and monthly average expenditure on Health \( E_H \). Though the constant value is high but none of the other regression results come out statistically insignificant. The \( R^2 \) is not only posses a low value but also the estimated F-value become statistically significant. So we reject the statistical validity of the equation signifying that the monthly expenditure on health of the Hmar sample households has a negative impact on their monthly average saving. Due to
high expenditure on health and a low level of income, the Hmar sample households cannot save much and they remain economically backward.

6.3. General Constraints and Problems

There are limiting factors which play important obstacles in the process of development. The economic factors are the result of interactions of human behaviors, traditional beliefs and behavioral pattern of the individual forming in a human society or community which is based on the agro-climatic and environmental conditions, congested to interplay the social and economic factors that do not freely allow the economic forces to generate effects in the interest of economic development. In other words, such factors lead the economy to a perpetual stagnation and to a close society which is mainly governed by several do and don’ts, of its micro economy. The tribal are the weakest among the weaker sections of the society because of the long periods of isolation and economic deprivation. The crop enterprise could not help the tribal farmers to increase their income and employment because of poor productivity, low availability of per capita arable land and also lack of other income generating avenues.

Hmar economic constraints and problems may not be only from economic factors; economic constraints may be in terms of socio-cultural factors, geographical factors or political factors. The earlier economists paid little attention while discussing economic constraints in a society. But any economics studied independently, neglecting the necessity of socio-cultural factors, may lead to a vague conclusion. Thus, in course of discussing economic constraints of the Hmar tribe, economic factors as well as non-economic factors which stand on the way of their economic uplift are discussed. Some of the constraints and problems faced by the Hmar sample household are discussed below.

1. Most of the Hmar sample villages are small and situated in the interior remote place where development of road and communication become difficult. Moreover, the dotting of small villages makes difficult for the
planners to improve infrastructure like electric power, water supply in the sample villages.

2. Majority of the Hmar sample households has followed traditional shifting cultivation as one of their main occupation. The low level of productivity from shifting cultivation makes the sample household to depend on a very low income and make the Hmar people saving difficult and most of the shifting cultivator run after credit.

3. Our regression equations also proved that service job is more profitable to other occupations practice by the Hmar sample household. But the low level of highly qualified person among the sample Hmar household makes difficult to engage more in service job. So lack of qualified person is one of the main reasons of economic backwardness.

4. Hmar are recognized as schedule tribe in the entire north-eastern region where they inhabits. According, they enjoyed all the facilities introduced by the state as well as central government time to time. But in case of the Hmar tribe of south Assam, they cannot enjoy the development facilities introduced for the tribal due to deprivation of electoral reservation in the plain districts of Assam including south Assam.

5. Health is one of the main non-economic factors which affect the Hmar economy. In our sample study, we find that malaria is a common disease among the Hmar tribe. In order to improve the health conditions of the Hmar tribe of south Assam, introduction of rural health centre is an urgent need to improve the Hmar economy.

6. In our sample, we find that just literate among the Hmar household is high, but highly qualified person is very less. The low level of highly qualified person among the sample Hmar is the result of less participation in government service job which is more profitable than the other occupational practice. To increase level of education among the Hmar tribe in the district, the government should establish more schools in the Hmar dominated areas.

7. Family size of the Hmar household is also very much against with their small income and savings. In this connection the family planning is an important factor for improvement of the Hmar economy.
Main economic constraints and problems of the sample Hmars which we find in our discussion is that many of them still follow their traditional occupation which has less scope for development and offers low level of income. Due to low earning, they cannot save and majority of the Hmar families run after Money lenders. Added to these, lack of proper marketing facilities to expose their product and infrastructure like electric current, roads, transport, etc are some of the main causes of their backwardness. Further, all the tribal development scheme introduced by the government in this valley have by-passed the Hmar people which is highly responsible for their backwardness.
Conclusion
In a thesis on Hmar tribe, the major problem is to find quantitative data pertaining to their economic life and activity. While anthropological, cultural and sociological studies abounds, this small tribe – both in respect of population (not exceeding a hundred thousand in total in the country) as well as spatial spread (confined to four small states in the northeastern part of the country) – has not been properly studied economically. In other words, there is very scanty literature available to benefit from. Our study in this respect has mainly been exploratory into an unexplored area.

In brief, the Hmar is a schedule tribe. The Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council, Silchar, has recorded the total population of the Hmar in south Assam as standing at 64,438 persons. The tribe is rural by residence, and their settlement villages are located mostly in the interior areas in the plains, the top of the hills and the jungles in south Assam. They are spread over merely ninety-nine villages in all. Their population in the urban areas is very small and urban Hmar is less than half percent of all Hmar. The Hmars live side by side with the various ethnic communities of Bengalese, Manipuri and Barmans today in Cachar (Barak Valley, south Assam, and northeastern India). In our thesis, though we have selected only Cachar district for sample survey, and the survey was spread over seven blocks, seventeen Hmar villages, and 250 households of Hmar in the year of 2007-08, generalizations are possible. The conclusion of our thesis is advanced in two parts: findings and policy prescriptions.

**Major Findings of the Study**

Sample Hmar have three types of household formation, namely, nuclear, joint and extended. More than sixty percent of the Hmars have nuclear household and a small percentage of them belong to both joint and extended family type. The family size consists of six household members generally; though some families have more than ten to fifteen household members. More than forty six percent households lived in both hut (Kutcha house) and Assam type (semi-pucca house). Quite small percentages have RCC building (pucca house). The working adults of sample households have broadly three types of occupation: agriculture, business and service
job. Agricultural occupation is very prominent; more than seventy percent are engaged for their livelihood. In the occupation of agriculturist, the method of production of crops is shifting cultivation in the hills. Very simple and traditional tools are used in jhum. Modern technique of production is rarely used by Hmars. As a result, production is not enough to generate surplus income. The low level of production and more engagement of Hmar sample households in shifting cultivation are regarded as one of the main determinants of Hmar economic backwardness in south Assam. The occupation of providing services is more profitable, but only few percentages of Hmar sample households are found engaged in the service job of teachers, civil servants and defense.

There are broadly three types of non-residential land among the Hmar tribe of south Assam, namely, private individual land, communal land and forest land. Largest amount of land consists of communal land followed by forest land, and the private individual occupies a very small size. Nearly forty percent are cultivated land and uncultivable land occupies more than twenty percent. In spite of being high percentage in cultivated land, land under irrigation is very insignificant. Majority of the Hmar sample household belong to marginal land and unclassified land (household from communal and forest land) and a very small percent Hmar household belongs to small and semi medium land holdings.

The income of the sample Hmar household depends on the type and size of land holdings. Highest percentages of households belong to marginal land holdings and they are included in a very low income group. A very few numbers of household belong to semi medium land size and is placed in the size class of considerable income. The insignificant size of land holdings and low level of income among a majority are two major determinants of backwardness in economic sense.

Due to low level of occupational choice of the Hmar sample households and insufficient size of land holdings, more than sixty percent of the sample households have no savings. The remaining percent of the household have a very low savings and only six sample households have savings more than rupees thirty thousand to thirty six thousand. No sample households have savings more than thirty six thousand per year in 2007-08 in Cachar district of Assam. Due to low level of
income and savings, majority of the Hmar households are indebted and greater part of the credit is advanced by private money lenders.

Given the meager size of private land, inefficient shifting cultivation, low annual income and savings, and high indebtedness, the Hmar sample households are characterized by lack of entrepreneurship also. We did not find any sample Hmar who have ever joined training programme in vocational education in small entrepreneurship or skill development run by the Ministry of Industry of the government of Assam and central government of India. It is mainly due to the low level of education and absence of proper infrastructure among the sample villages. More than thirty percent of the samples Hmars are illiterate and the remaining persons have a very low level of qualification. The percentages of level of education from matriculate and above are very insignificant among the sample Hmars.

In the traditional input-output framework of economic analysis, a marginalized, small sized tribe called Hmar has not benefitted in terms of use of improved land, skilled labor and productive capital and achievement of high yield and crop output. They still use unimproved hilly land and group labor to practice shifting cultivation of major crops. Having low savings and income, they do not have capacity for capital formation. A number of them are part shifting cultivator and part grazer of domestic animals. A vicious circle of laggardness and backwardness (in comparison to other tribes of Assam) has led to the constraint entrepreneurship, which is presently maintained at its low level by the force of lack of proper education of households and lack of general infrastructure in the society of Hmar. In all the sample villages, malaria is very common disease and many of them are infected. It not only disturbs their daily work but also increases their expenditure on medication. The sample villages except Hmarkhawlien, primary health centre is not available.

In south Assam, the plain tribal communities of the Barmans and the Bodo have enjoyed government funds for tribal development. But in the case of Hmar, they cannot enjoy any development funds which are introduced for the improvement of tribal. The main reason is that the Hmars do not have electoral reservation in south Assam and they are treated as general populations. Though, the Hmar are one of the schedule tribe communities recognized by the Government of India, there are some
discriminations among them, which is maintained by the government from state to state. For example, the Hmar of Autonomous district of Assam and the Hmar of Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya are enjoyed all facilities provided for schedule tribe by the government from time to time, but the Hmar of south Assam being the same community, do not enjoyed whatever development funds enjoyed by the Hmar in other district and state. Hmars of south Assam are economically backward than that of the Hmar in other places. Moreover, we have also found that except Hmarkhawlien village, Silchar and Digger village, all the other sample villages have no electric and water connection. This results in huge amount of expenditure for maintaining light.

Our regression results from chapter five and chapter six also establish that the contribution of the monthly average income and savings from agriculture and business occupations of the Hmar to the monthly average income is not only low, but also statistically unacceptable. The low level of income and savings due to large concentration on traditional occupation is one of the main determinants of economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe in the district. The statistical results of income and savings from service occupation comes out statistically significant and it is more profitable to other occupations which we find in the Hmar tribe, but their literacy rate and level of education is still very low for more participation in service job. In short, we may say that the main stay of the sample Hmar economy is agriculture. In which majority of them practice shifting cultivation in the hills and lived in interior remote jungles. Where there are no proper roads, electric current and water supply. They have a very low income, which is not sufficient for much savings and many sample households are indebted.

**Policy Prescription**

A fact stands. Economic benefits are granted to both the hills and plain tribes as per the government policy in south Assam. These development funds come from central government as well as state government under the headings of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and the Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP). The main beneficiaries
are the Schedule Tribe (Plains) communities like the Barman, Rabha, and Boro Kachari. What has been ignored for long time is that there are also a number of other Schedule Tribes (Tills) who are very much living in south Assam; they are the Hmar, Naga, Kuki, Khasi, and Mizo. Given the fact that there is absence of sufficient electoral representation, these tribal communities have not enjoyed the various packages of economic benefits sanctioned by the government. In the backdrop of these circumstances, it is pertinent to advance a suggestion: the central as well as state government should make a pool of tribal development fund separately for Schedule Tribe (Hills) and Schedule Tribe (Plains) and distribute the fund on some basis of parity among all the tribal communities both the hills and plains tribes living in this valley. There must not be any discrimination in the line of which had happened in the past. Such measures would be required to reduce the economic backwardness of the Hmar tribe. Given the poor economic base of income and savings among Hmar, it is required.

Secondly, non-money-fund- assistance is also required. It is urgent to have up-to-date community-wise information about population, work participation rate, land owned, income level, literacy rate, and amenities available to divergent tribes in south Assam. Till date, there is not comprehensive and meaningful data accumulated by public agencies. Very significant quantitative information is not available for the Hmar communities living in the plain districts of Assam after 1971 census. For example, in 1991 Census, the total population of the Hmar tribe in Assam was 11,189 persons who were divided into 10790 persons in the north Cachar hill district and 399 persons in Karbi Anglong district. In this matter, the study feels that the census department should also make a record of individual community wise data among the Hmar communities of plain districts especially in south Assam. So that the planners could have accurate information and make a development plans accordingly.

Thirdly, in 1996 the Assam government set up the Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council, in his Notification Order No. TAD/BC/30/96/34, dated Dispur the 18th March 1996 for the benefits of the schedule tribe (Hills) living in South-Assam in relation to the demand placed by the Hmar leaders in 1991 (Zote, 2006-07). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Government
and the Hmar leaders clearly mentioned that the council will enjoy ‘maximum possible autonomy’ and the council will get fund from Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). At present, instead of enjoying all these facilities, the council yearly received only rupees five laks from the Ministry of Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes for all the hill tribes living in south Assam which is not sufficient for the improvement of all the hills tribes living in this valley. So the study suggests that the government of Assam should look into the matter and allocates sufficient funds to the council for the development of Schedule Tribe (Hills) living in this valley.

Fourth, the study found that, out of 16 Hmar sample villages, eight villages are not electrified and the villages are located 10 kilometers to 15 kilometers away from the main road. The villagers spend 2.73 percent from their monthly income for light. So, the study suggest introduction of rural electrification as earlier as possible in the Hmar villages. So that, those villagers should come to the main stream of development.

Fifthly, the study also calls for more encouragement of poultry farms and cattle rearing in those Hmar sample villages of south Assam. Since shifting cultivations is not profitable. In this connection, the policy makers should make arrangements for loans to the sample villages with a subsidies rate so as to minimize participation of Hmars in shifting cultivation in south Assam. Since majority of the sample households are indebted in an informal credit institution with a very high rate of interest, the study suggest that the government should set up more institutional credit like- rural banks, gramin banks etc. to the Hmar inhabited areas to minimize borrowing from informal credit institutions especially private money lenders. In this connection, the financial institutions should accept community owned land documents and documents provided to the village headman by forest department of Assam which is not accepted at present. So that all the Hmar sample villages should avail credit at a minimum interest rate and the production is expected to increase.

Lastly, the study also suggest that the government should encourage more engagement in higher education of the sample Hmar households. More engagement in higher education will lead the Hmars to participate more in service job and business which is most profitable occupation as we find in our survey.
Appendix – 1

Hmar: A Social, Cultural and Political Profile
Our purpose in the appendix is to underline the “initial conditions” of Sample Hmar Tribe. These initial conditions of the past shed light on the fact that the Hmar has been since long time socially and politically unstable, ignored and laggard tribe. The current backwardness- both economic and non-economic –is also a matter of inheritance from the past- the “initial conditions”. A tribe which has been too much laggard finds it difficult to catch up with the present opportunities. We discuss the domestic, social and political dimension of life and the world of Hmar, and also elaborate on the linguistic and geographical theories about the original home, based on three research works of Laldena (2008), Pudaite (1963) and Pakhungte (1983).

**Introduction**

Hmar tribe has been migratory throughout. In course of migration and settlement, different groups were known by divergent ‘clan’ names. In the course of early settlement called ‘Kabaw-Thantlang-Kale’, a cluster of clans evolved and subsequently the multiplicity of clan names were carried over. In the course of final settlement in Mizoram, all these clans assumed a common name called ‘Hmar’. The migration from original place was always mediated by mountain passes and rivers. In the oral history of mobility, migration and settlement, the Diasporas clans remember the significance of Rundung River and Run River - both situated between Manipur and Mizoram. Once settled, however, linguistic tradition rather than rivers and mountain pass quite important in Hmar life. A linguistic enquiry and analysis started.

There are today two theories about the origin and meaning of the term ‘Hmar’. The first theories suggest that the term might have originated from the word ‘hmar’ which means ‘north’ (Lal Dena, 2008, p.10). Supporters of this theory argue that the ruling Lushai clan used the nickname for those who left Mizoram and settled themselves gradually and came to adopt the name as a common nomenclature. Liangkhaia and other Mizo historians have supported this view. This implies that the term came into use only when the Hmar settled down in Mizoram. In 1904 G.A. Grierson in his ‘Linguistic Survey of India’ formally used the term but spelt it as
Mhar. The second theory which is based on oral traditions contends that the term was originally derived from ‘Hmar’ which means “tying of one’s hair in a knot on the nape of one’s hand”. According to the Hmar tradition, there were once two brothers- Hrumswawn and Tukbemsawm. Because of a sore on the nape of his head during his childhood, Hrumswawn had to tie his hair in a knot on his forehead which he continued till death. After his death, his descendent adopted the same hair style. The Lushai call them Pawi but they always call themselves as Lai. Majority this group now live in Chin state in Myanmar and the rest in different parts of Mizoram particularly in Chhintuipui District where they have their own separate autonomous district(Laldena, 2008). Tukbemsawm, the younger brother tied his hair in a knot on the nape of his head and the Hmars who adopted Tukbemsawm’s hair-style are believed to be his progenies and were called Hmars. However, the Lushai tribe and other kindred tribes who used the same hairstyle were not called Hmar. Therefore the first theory is much more convincing than the second theory.

Original Home

It is always difficult in the discipline of social history and cultural discourse to trace the original settlement of a migratory horde. This is as truer about Hmar tribe. No one knows exactly from where the Hmar has originated. In this regard they are three traditional theories about the origin of the Hmar. First theory relates to the tradition of giving primacy to the Jewish connection of Hmar. It links the origin of the Hmars to the Israelites. Surprisingly enough, there are some references in Hmar folk song and culture that tend to support this theory. One of the oldest festival of the Hmar is called Sikpui Ruoi (winter festival) and the opening song called Sikpui Hlapui for this important occasion occupies such a sacred place that the festival could start only after the song was sang with due solemnity and rapt attention. Let us cite the text of the song in Hmar and its English rendering:

“Sikpui inthang kan ur laia, Chang tuipui aw, senma hrili kang intan. Ke ra law a, ka leido aw. Sumah sum ang, zanah mei lawv invak e, An tur a sa, thlu a ruul aw, In phawstel le in ral feite zuong thaw ro. Sunra zula, ka leido aw, Ke ra law a, meisum ang lawv invak e, Sun ra zula, ka leido aw, Laimi sa ang chang tuipui in lem zova. A varuolaw la tache, Suonglung chunga tuizuong put kha la tache”.
English translation:

While we are preparing for the sikpui festival, The big red sea divided. As we march forward fighting our foes. We are being led by a cloud during day And by a pillar of fire during night. Our enemies, O ye folks, are thick with fury, Come out with your shields and spears. Fighting our foes all day, we march along, As cloud-fire goes a fore. The enemies we fight all day, the big sea Swallowed them like beasts. Collect the quails, and fetch the water, That springs out of the rocks.
(Source: Laldena, 1988).

The Sikpui Hla is self-explanatory and vividly refers to the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the events that followed before and after they crossed the Red Sea. The Hmar continued to celebrate this festival even after they had settled in northeast India and traces of sacred stone slabs used in these celebrations can be seen in Manipur, Mizoram, and North-Cachar Hills in Assam till today. Though there are no written documents to support the theory of Jewish connection, there are similarities in the religious sacrificial rites and practices of the Pre-Christian Hmars and the Jews in biblical times (Laldena, 2008).

Second theory relates to the Sinlung tradition which claims that the original home of the Hmar was called Sinlung. A traditional song is devoted to this tradition

“Khaw Sinlung ah Kwat siel ang ka zuong souk a; Mi le nel lo tam a e, Hriemi hrai a. Kan Siengna Sinlung ram hmimgthang, Ka nu ram ka pa ram ngai. Chawngzil ang kokir thei chansien Ka nu ram ka pa ram ngai”.

English translation:

Out of city Sinlung I jumped out like a mithun (animal) Innumerable were the encounters, With the children of men. My motherland, famous Sinlung, Home of my ancestors. Could it be called back like Chawngzil, Home of my ancestors.
(Source: Pudaite, 1963).

It is difficult to ascertain the exact location of Sinlung today. A Hmar historian, Hranglien Songate identifies it as Tailing or Sinlung in Southwest China whereas Rochunga Pudaite is of the view that this Sinlung might have been Sinning in Central China. According to the most recent studies, a small township also called Sinlung, situated not very far from Yulung River in Szechuan province, could be the place which is referred to in Hmar folk songs. What is more or less certain and
agreed upon by most historians/scholars is that the Hmars originally came from Central China. From the above cited songs, it can be inferred that the Hmar were pushed out by a stronger power. The Chin dynasty absorbed many of the tribes that were already in China and pushed out those who refused to be absorbed. The Hmar were perhaps among those who resisted and were pushed out from China (Pudaite, 1963).

The third traditional theory highlights the Shan tradition and westward movement. After Sinlung, the first known settlement of the Hmar people was in the present Shan State of Burma (Myanmar). Traditions and numerous songs of the Hmars tell the story of their prosperous life while in Shan state. According to Hmar historian Songate, “The Hmars lived a much more civilized life in Shan state than in Sinlung. They already cultivated rice while none of the other groups around them ever knew anything about it.” They have learned better the art of war and the use of iron and brass implements. Many of their great festivals like Khounglawm (spring festival), Lunglak (autumn festival), and Sesun (solemn celebration) all begins from Shan state.

A generation of prosperity in Shan state was intercepted by a disastrous famine and the Hmars and other tribes were moved towards the north and northwest in search of food. Traveling closely with them were the Lushai tribe on the south and the Kuki tribe on the north. At one time the entire tribal group was known as Kuki Tribe. The thirst for better land and also constant conflicts with other tribes also further led them to move westward. They reached the present Chin Hills, and from there they kept on moving till the reached the Lushai Hills, presently called as Mizoram in India. In Lushai hills, the Hmar people build villages and bear the name after their clans. Today, many of these villages are in existence under the same name. Examples of these are Khawbung, Zote, Biete, Khelte, Darngawn, Leiri, Lung\au and so forth (Pudaite, 1963, p.23). In course of time the majority of the Hmar people left Mizoram and spread over the contiguous hills presently called as Cachar and North Cachar Districts of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Manipur. Till today some of the Hmars are also there in Burma (Myanmar).
Each of these clans is again sub-divided into sub-clans and families clans, and each clan has a dialect of its own. However, a common dialect has been developed among them which we called as Hmar language so as to communicate among the different clans of the Hmar people.

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Source: Pakhungte, 1983, p.9

**Contemporary Domestic Life**

Normally the Hmar villages are located on hilltops or a ridge due to several reasons, the chief reason was the good defensive position it commanded during the days of tribal war. In those days, the villages were surrounded by wooden stockades with blockhouses at the gates. Normally, the young boys used to keep vigilance in order to protect the village from enemy, wild animals etc. The sizes of the Hmar villages are not same. Some are big and at the same time some villages are small. Especially during the inter-tribal wars, they prefer big villages, they stayed normally five hundreds to one thousands. But after the advent of the British, they suppressed the tribal wars and also the size of the villages become smaller. Now, the Hmar villages are normally thirty to five hundreds houses. Normally, in the Hmar villages we find bamboo houses and the roof is thatched. Chicken are usually kept in the front porch which is partially enclosed, and animals like pigs and cows are kept beneath the floor
of the house. But in recent times, some changes have been made in building of the houses. Like other communities the Hmar peoples who stay in town make buildings, Assam type and half wall etc, which generally depend on the economic condition of the family.

If the income of the family is high than they build good house whereas if income is small they are compelled to stay in the traditional types of houses. In ancient time, almost every village has a big house called Zawlbuk (Bachelor’s Quarters). Access to the interior of the building is obtained by a single entrance by climbing over a huge beam of wood. A large fire place is constructed in the middle in which fire constantly burns. On three sides of the wall, except the front part, sleeping platforms are erected. All unmarried young men above fifteen years of age are required to sleep there. The village youth below fifteen years of age supply the firewood. Each child is allotted a number of bundles he must supply each month. Very strict discipline is maintained by a village commander called Valupa who is elected by the village authority. In this place, young stars are given rigorous training in the art of the tribal war, wrestling and village government. The youths are ever ready for any emergency such as fire or war. But the British discouraged the practice of Zawlbuk and its gradually dying away. Now, no Zawlbuk is found in the Hmar village.

A Hmar can marry any woman except a consanguineous kin. Traditionally marriage with the mother’s brother’s daughter was preferred. The age of marriage is 18 years for a girl and 21 years for a boy. In the olden days, a chief desired to marry another chief’s daughters. Mutual consent is the most prevalent mode of acquiring a mate. At first, the boy and the girl go through a period of courtship. When the boy wishes to marry, he sends messengers to the girl’s parents to settle the marriage. Once this is done the girl’s parents kill a pig or any big animal and a feast is given to the groom’s party and relatives. Then the girl is invited to the boy’s house by relatives who work out the details of the marriage. The wedding ceremony takes place only when the girl arrives at the boy’s house. The real marriage is solemnized in church and the service is conducted by the pastor.

Foods like cakes, bread and tea are served for the invitees or a feast is also given depending on the economic condition of the bride’s family. Another mode of
acquiring a mate is marriage by elopement, which is less respectable. The amount of the bride price is also not same among the Hmar tribe. The amount of bride price differs from clan to clan, but normally the bride price among the Hmar tribe ranges from rupees.500.00 to rupees.700.00. The amount is divided among the bride’s family. The major share goes to the bride’s father and the smaller amounts are given to the paternal and maternal relatives.

The rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. In case the girl seeks a divorce, she has to persuade her parents to agree to refund the bride price which they have received, (suminsuo). In case the boy seeks a divorce, he simply gives a sum of Rs.100.00 to the girl (makman). The bride price paid by the boy is forfeited if the divorced is initiated by the boy. A widow, widower and divorce can remarry. Nowadays, they are expected to take remarriage license from the church. But there is no restriction for inter-community marriage and it is performed in the church.

The father is the head of the family and his authority is obeyed. He represents the family in all public meetings, directs the family affairs and provides food for every member. The mother’s chief duty is to look after the home. Though, the Hmar traditionally follow an extended family pattern. The number of families appears to be increasing at present. When the son gets married, he brings his wife in to his father’s house. The bride is thoroughly indoctrinated in the family traditions and practices. After sometime, the married son constructs a house with the help of all members and begins to live separately.

The extended family pattern is considered good because of many reasons. They think that fair opportunities are given to the child and each day to socialize and learn family administration by observing decision making processes in the extended family. Such opportunities are not available in the nuclear family. The general rule of inheritance is ultimo geniture i.e. the youngest son inherits all property. The elder sons can expect at least a portion of the property. Succession of family office is patri-potestal i.e. the elder son becomes the head of the family after the death of the father (Pakhuongte, 1983).
Contemporary Social Life

In the north eastern region, most of the tribal people are Christian. But Christianity is not their original religion. Before adopting Christianity they had their original religion called animism i.e. belief in the soul or anima. Like other tribes, the traditional Hmar religion was also animism. They worship objects of nature like mountains, the rocks and the rivers. According to their religious belief, each object of nature is possessed by spirit. They believe that some of the spirits are harmful and some are good, among good spirit they also believed in the existence of one supreme being or spirit, the creator of every thing, gracious and meaningful. The supreme spirit is called ‘Pathien’ meaning God.

But, in the first decade of the 20th century the Hmar people started converting into Christianity under the influence of the Christian missionary from England. Now, almost all the Hmar people follow Christianity and their traditional religion has been totally abandoned. The sacrifice related to evil spirits and good spirits have been abolished from their society under the influence of Christianity. At present, regularly they celebrate Christmas, Good Friday, Pentecost Day and Ester Sunday. The church played an important role in the development of the Hmar people, by way of opening schools in some villages, and looking after orphan children.

Under the influence of Christianity among the Hmar tribe, a number of modifications in the form of abolitions, replacement and addition took place in the religious life of the Hmar people, though they still followed the indigenous custom related to marriage namely, courting before marriage, negotiations before actual marriage ceremony bride price and traditional custom of divorce. After seven days or a month of the birth of a child, the baby is brought to church for baptism. The pastor, the church elder or village elder mainly gives name to the child. If any one of the Hmar dies, the pastor or the church elder is informed about the death of a person. They come to the house to recite passages from the Bible.

The dead body is buried in the graveyard. For seven days or more the villagers come to the mourning house and sing sorrowful songs. The village boys stay for three nights in the mourning house to give moral support to the mourners. After a year, a
memorial stone is erected on the burial spot. On that day, the relatives are invited to attend the function (called lungdaw).

Education of the Hmar people was first initiated by the British missionary named Watkins Roberts of Wales, in 1910. A school was opened at Senvon village in Manipur for the first time with the support of the local chief. Before the advent of missionaries the Hmar people had no script writing. The indigenous oral practices of the Hmar languages and literature got its written form in the hands of Christian missionaries with the advent of missionaries to the Hmar society. The script of the Hmar languages is like English, but there are some difference between the English letter and the Hmar letter. There are twenty-four letters in the Hmar script. They are as follows:

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Further, the Hmar language has been recognized as a medium of instruction up to class VII in Assam in 1969 and MIL up to Higher Secondary level in Assam and up to degree level in Manipur University. In this way some of the Hmar are highly educated and at the same time they are serving in a high posts in state as well as at the central level. But at the same time, majority of the Hmar tribes are still uneducated and they live in the village only to cultivate jhum land in the hill slopes.

The Hmar village are like an independent state ruled by its own Lal (chief). The chief is the supreme authority with regard to the judicial and administrative powers. Although the chief exercises great powers but he does not act like a dictator, rather he act like the head of the democratic government. He was assisted in the village administration by Khawnbawl upa (chief assistant) and the Khawnbawls (the assistant). The Lal selects the Khawnbawls among the village peoples in consultation with the village elders. Out of the selected Khawnbawls, the Lal then selects Khawnbawlupa. Another important official was Tlangsam.
The duty of Tlangsam is to proclaim the order of the village chief and his assistant in the village so that all people of the village might know what the orders are. Besides, he also looks after the construction of the chief’s house, the Zawlbuk etc. The chief assistant and the assistant who assisted the chief in the village administration were entitled to choices of land for cultivation, and they were relaxed from paying taxes to the chief.

Political Life

Before 1956, the government recorded the Hmar as a part of the Mizos (Lushai) or Kuki. Till today, the local people in this valley called the Hmar as Mizo, Kuki or Naga. The name Kuki has been given after by the Bengalis and the British recorded the same mistake. However, the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes list modification Order 1956, issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India, Vide their Notification No. S.R.O. 2477A Dated 29th October 1956, the Hmar are recorded as a separate tribe. The Hmar people enjoyed all the Scheduled Tribe facilities issued by the government from time to time in Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and the two Hill districts in Assam, but the Hmar of south Assam or the plain districts of Assam are not received the same facilities which is received by the Hmars in other place. The Indian constitution did not define the concept of ‘tribe’. But, as par article 342, the president may specify by public notification a list of Schedule Tribes. The Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes Amendment Act, 1976, specify twenty three Schedule Tribes in Assam, fourteen tribes in the two hills districts viz- N.C. Hills and Karbi Anglong and nine tribes in the plain districts of Assam.

As per the policy of the Government of Assam, if the Schedule tribe of the Autonomous Hills Districts resides permanently in the Plain Districts, they cannot be treated as Schedule Tribe in the Plains. They are treated as ‘Hills Tribes in Plain’. Similarly, Schedule Tribes for Plains Districts, resides permanently in the Hill Districts, they will be treated as ‘Plain Tribes in Hills’. However, except for electoral
reservation they would be entitled for all economics, educational and employment benefits.

In short, different Hmar historians have different views about the origin of the Hmar. The tradition-1 suggest that, the Hmar has its origin in Egypt and entered Israel, and the tradition-11 suggest Sinlung in Central China and the tradition-111 suggest Shan in Burma (Myanmar). Whatever it may be, it is difficult to predict the exact origin of the Hmar now. Perhaps, the Hmar might have been migrated from Israel and entered China and Myanmar and settled there for a long time. According to the Hmar historians, a powerful epidemic drove away from Shan state (Myanmar) and entered North East India and settled permanently. No one knows the exact time of migration from Burma to north east India, but according to Songate (1977), it may be in between 8th and 11th century.

The Hmar villages are mainly situated in the hilly areas of north east India. In the village, they maintained a good administrative system. The villages located in the jhum land permission have their own chief (Lal). The chief appointed the village elder to support him. But the Hmar villages located outside jhum land permission have another administrative system. They elect the chief called village president, secretary and members. If any disputes arise in the village, the Lal or village president along with their followers will decide over the cases. Punish or pardons depend on the chief decision.

Though, the Hmar are one among the schedule tribe community in India, there is some discrimination among them which is maintained by the government from state to state. For example, the Hmar of Autonomous district of Assam and the Hmar of Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya are enjoyed all the facilities of schedule tribe given by the government from time to time, but the Hmar of south Assam being the same community does not enjoyed what the Hmar enjoyed in other district and state. So, the Hmars of south Assam are more economically backward than the Hmar in other places. (We have summarized about Hmars in this appendix which are but based on only three works of Laldena (2008), Pakhungte (1983) and Pudaite (1963). Other works may modify the description about Hmar).
Appendix – 2

Mode of Production in Tribal Economy
A tribal economy and its specificities have been studied in the literature by using either of the two concepts: mode of production and economic system. In a study in the framework of economic system, the structure of institutions, organization and values are the focus. A traditional economic system is contrasted with a modern economic system. It is therefore possible to characterize a tribal economy as a traditional economic system based on traditional values, inefficient institutions and outmoded organization. The economic system approach has limitations. It fails to tell us about the level of productive forces among tribe and nuances of property and production relation. It is in the conception of tribal economy as a mode of production that studies of such nuances and dimension of tribal economic life become possible.

In the writings of Karl Marx, the mode of production (way of producing) is a combination of productive forces, social and technical relations of production. The productive forces include human labor power, tools, equipment, buildings, technologies, materials and improved land. Social and technical relations of production include the relations of property, power and control. Marx regarded the productive ability and participation in social relation as the two essential characteristics of human beings. Productive forces and social relations both of which are different sides of the development of the social individual-appear to capital only as a means to produce its limited basis (Haney, 1997, pp. 487-89).

According to Marx, the combinations of forces and relation of production means that the way people relate to the physical world and the way people relate to each other socially are bound up together in specific and necessary ways. People need to consume to survive, but to consume they need to produce, and in producing they necessarily enter into relations which exist independently of their will (Mandel, 1968). For Marx, the whole secret of why/how a social order exists and the causes of social change must be discovered in the specific mode of production that a society has. He further argued that the mode of production substantially shaped the nature of the mode of distribution, the mode of circulation and the mode of consumption. All of these together constitute the economic sphere.

To understand the way wealth is distributed and consumed, it is necessary to understand the conditions under which it is produced. A mode of production is therefore built upon a structure and a process: the structure of production and its
relations and the process of distribution of the existing and operation in a given socio-political set up. The mode of production implies technique and organization of economic activities relating to production. The structure of production means social class in the performance of production activities and the process of distribution between different social classes (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1976).

In a broad outline, Marx recognized seven distinct epochs of human history, each corresponding to a particular mode of production: primitive communism, the Asiatic mode of production, the slave mode of production, the feudal mode of production, the capitalist mode of production, the socialist mode of production, the communist mode of production. Following all this definition, the mode of production in tribal economy is primitive, indigenous and culturally predominant. So, the tribal economy may be a part of the primitive communist mode of production of Marx. The primitive communism society is organized in traditional tribal structure, typified by shared production and consumption of the entire social product. As no permanent surplus product is produced, there is no possibility of ruling class, and this mode of production is characterized to be a classless economy. Rigorous ritualized social control is the typifying feature of this mode of production.

In any social formation, different mode of production might emerge and exist alongside each other, linked together economically. To each different mode of production, this responds different social classes and strata in the population. So, for example, urban capitalist industry might co-exist with rural peasant production for subsistence and simple exchange and tribal hunting and gathering. Old and new modes of production might combine to form a hybrid economy.

In the light of this theoretical framework, it is clear that there exists a hybrid mode of production in the north eastern India. The economic problems of tribal which we found in the early of Indian independence have changed. The characteristic of tribe which was found in the early independence do not exist anymore. The data on tribe which was not available in the middle of sixties and seventies are now available. What exists today in the north eastern India is a transition from tribal mode of production to capitalist mode. However, this transition is not one of developing ‘pure’ capitalist mode. These are distortions and underdevelopment. In many cases,
the economic system of tribal are also integrated with modern market economy and the tribal economy is in transition.

At present, tribal economy is a mixture of both traditional and modern economy. The traditional practice of barter economy vanished long back and number of tribal participating in production for market. But in lieu of development, the mode is underdeveloped and backwardness in terms of economic parameters. Pathy (1981) observed that there are two vital dimensions of such transitions in the region. One, such a transition and transformation have not been accidental. It has evolved through several forces- both endogenous and exogenous-in the past. The role of the state among external forces on tribe has been paramount. In spite of theoretical soundness philosophy propounded by Elvin and Nehru, the policymakers and planners have set free the forces of disequilibria and now class formation have emerged among the tribal society by forgetting the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood. Second, there are two vital propositions of the thesis of economic transitions in the regions worth consideration: the emergence of peasantry with stratification, and budding of the mode of production transition either to the peasant economy or agrarian capitalism.

In the new phase of transition, the classical framework of surplus has replaced the archaic tribal mode of production and giving birth to peasant mode of production in the tribal economy of north east India.

In the northeastern region, the archaic tribal social formation vanished long back. The British colonial administration during the nineteen century did encounter pastoral and agricultural economies of tribal settlements (Ansari, 2006). The process of transformation posited to have had begun in the beginning of twentieth century. The tribal cultivator had been evolving into a peasant, who were owing individual property rights in land, setting on the land of permanent plough based sedentary agriculture, utilizing individualized family and wage labor, going through the process of fragmentation into nuclear family units, forced into the differentiated economic relations with other peasants and rural actors, involved in monetary transaction, brought into the nexus of tenancy and indebtedness, and finally, de-peasantries by set of endogenous and exogenous forces beyond control and discretionary power. The socio-economic inequalities and livelihood deprivation of a
section of tribal peasant households is the outcome of peasantisation-depesantisation matrix origination with expending surplus.

In short, there cannot be generally acceptable single theories of mode of production for the Hmars of south Assam. Like the other tribal societies of the rest of the world, their modes of production are governed by the type of occupations they follow. In a traditional Hmar society, shifting cultivation has been their main occupations and the mode of production has been very simple. It involves cutting of jungles, sowing of seeds with a very simple tools. The land used for production was communal property and transactions takes place in a barter method. The traditional Hmar society can be archaic tribal mode of production. After the introduction of money in an economy as a medium of exchange, different new occupations have been followed by the Hmar of south Assam by following the classical framework of surplus which was not in traditional Hmar economy.

Such as wet land cultivation, horticulture, small business, service etc. Consequently, peasant mode of productions has emerged. The method of production which has been used in the traditional cultivation is not possible in wet land or horticulture. It requires improved technique. In this type of occupation, the Hmar tribe are also using scientific methods of cultivation like fertilizer, high yielding seeds and tractors (which was absent in the traditional occupation). Comparatively, income of the Hmar tribes engaged in this type of cultivation is high though they do not have much surplus for savings. Unfortunately, a majority of the Hmar tribe of south Assam still follows their traditional occupations without improvement in the method of cultivation, which sustain them in a low level of income and makes savings difficult, which in turn affects their economy.

When the mainstream capitalist model of development was imposed by the government of India in the erstwhile tribal economy of the northeast, such development strategy has been effective in changing the production relations. But it has failed to improve the “forces of production”. Therefore, the character of tribal economies of the northeastern India in general and Hmar tribal economy in particular has been changed and new forms of production and property relation have emerged but the material base (that is, the forces of production) have not improved. The tribal
households remain poor and distressed and without sufficient capital, earnings and income. All these are because of distortions, rigidities and inconsistencies in the “transition” of the mode of production.

If there are peasant households within the Hmar tribe, they are poor in terms of choice of occupation, source of income and level of savings. These variables which are related with the “forces of production” act as determinants of Hmar tribe in transition but economically backward section of Assamese society and economy. What is true of Hmar is equally true of rest of the tribes and other populations of Assam.
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